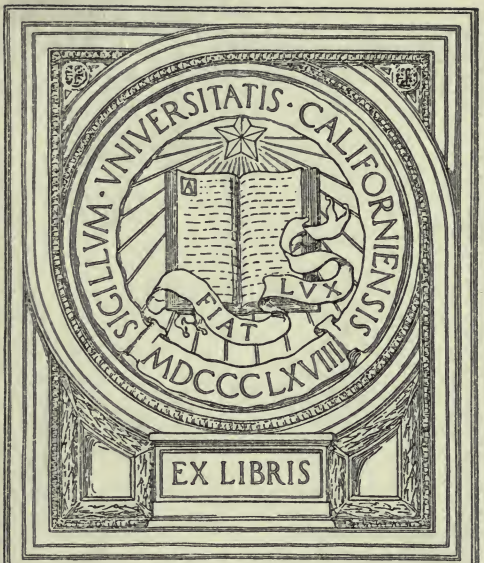

SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY
EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS

FICTION

ENGLISH SHORT STORIES
FROM THE FIFTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

920
E58

THIS IS NO. 743 OF *EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY*. THE PUBLISHERS WILL BE PLEASED TO SEND FREELY TO ALL APPLICANTS A LIST OF THE PUBLISHED AND PROJECTED VOLUMES ARRANGED UNDER THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

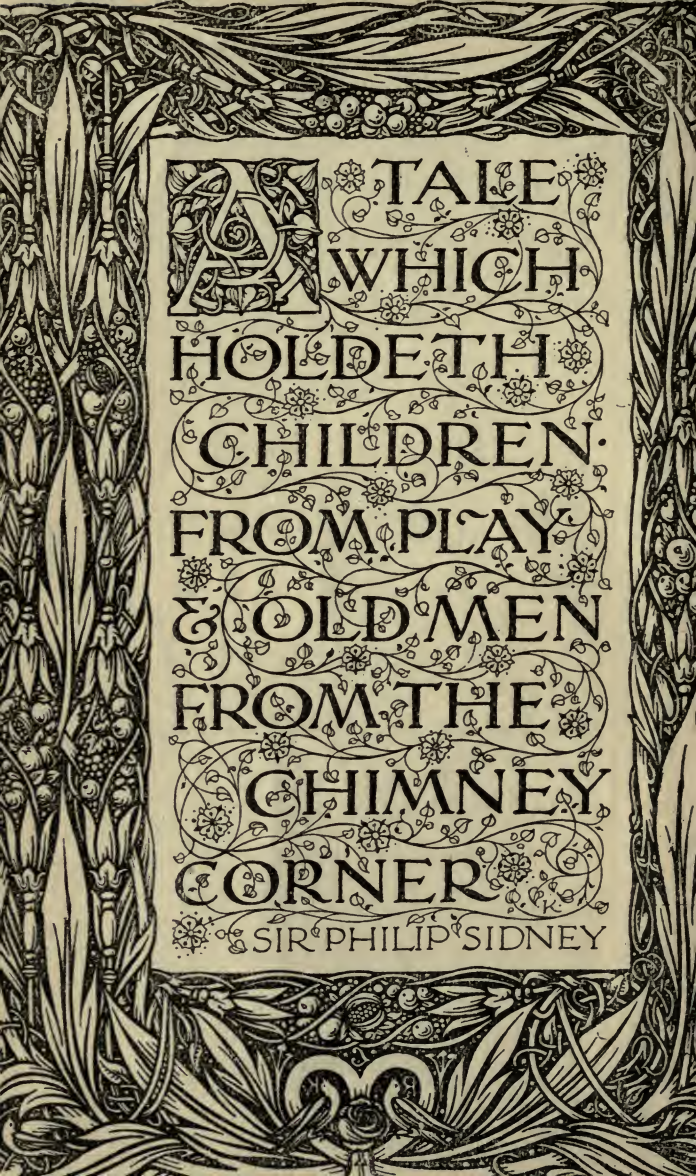
TRAVEL ❦ SCIENCE ❦ FICTION
THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY
HISTORY ❦ CLASSICAL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
ESSAYS ❦ ORATORY
POETRY & DRAMA
BIOGRAPHY
REFERENCE
ROMANCE



THE ORDINARY EDITION IS BOUND IN CLOTH WITH GILT DESIGN AND COLOURED TOP. THERE IS ALSO A LIBRARY EDITION IN REINFORCED CLOTH

LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

495643


A TALE
WHICH
HOLDETH
CHILDREN
FROM PLAY
& OLD MEN
FROM THE
CHIMNEY
CORNER
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

ENGLISH SHORT STORIES

Selected to show the development of the SHORT STORY from the FIFTEENTH to the TWENTIETH Century

LONDON & TORONTO
PUBLISHED BY J·M·DENT & SONS LTD & IN NEW YORK BY E·P·DUTTON & CO

INTRODUCTION

A SELECTION of short stories in English which would show the full development of this class of literature would make a volume many times larger than the present, and would demand serious study of a somewhat strenuous character. The collection here offered has been planned, in the first place, for enjoyment, but at the same time an attempt has been made to give, in broad outline, some idea of the development of the short story written in English, from the middle ages to our own time. The selection does not lay claim to any critical or scholarly merit, but it is hoped that it may give a fairly clear impression of continuity sufficiently full enough to serve as a guide from century to century and supply material upon which an interested reader can work, if he feels inclined to go further in the pursuit of a fascinating subject.

The history of the English short story is the history of changing tastes and fashions, and in judging the relative values of the tales here offered this fact must be remembered. The reader must bear in mind that any given story has been included not only for its intrinsic interest, but also to show the character of the short story which was fashionable at a certain period. A tale which, on its own merits, would now be voted trite or sentimental, moralising or stilted, was at one time in our history highly acceptable to English readers, and therefore serves to hold up the mirror to the life of a bygone period.

This volume does not contain any examples of stories in verse, but in a review, however cursory, of the origin and development of the short story, the student must pay some regard to the tale told in verse, at all events in the early period, when this medium was usually chosen.

The literature of the Catholic church is the earliest source of English short stories, and from this source two streams descend, one carrying on the idea of conveying a moral, the other aiming at giving æsthetic enjoyment. The former stream, so far as real literature is concerned, may be said to have dried up about the time of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, while the latter has broadened and deepened into the finished

product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which in its best examples exhibits the highest form of literary art. But this second stream is not unaffected by the character of the waters of its source. The modern writer of a short story writes to give pleasure, regardless of pointing the moral, but he cannot write at all without a nucleus of thought, which either provides a pungent commentary on life, or arouses that sense of incongruity which lies at the base of the truest humour, or creates that feeling of tragic horror for which philosophers have claimed a mental and spiritual value of a very high order. The best type of modern story may not be a morality, but it is most assuredly a thing of vision, spiritual outlook and discernment, nor does it ever wholly satisfy. It sets the mind roaming in mystic realms and "fairy-lands forlorn," or leaves behind that sense of wonder on "Man, on Nature and on human life" which uplifts and preserves the soul of man in a material world.

The church of primitive times used the short story for teaching purposes, and the earliest examples were drawn from Greek sources of the fifth century A.D., a number of these little narratives being translated into late West-Saxon and enshrined in sermons as well as in the works of Alfred, the ninth century Englished version of Bede, and the works of Bishop Waerferth, while it is worth noting that Bede also tells several excellent stories of native origin. This type of devotional story was more fully developed in the thirteenth century, which saw the production of the *South English Legendary*, a compendious collection of lives of the saints for the use of the church throughout the year. Besides the religious story, we find in this period the use of short *exempla* in sermons and homilies as well as fables and apologues, the former dealing with the doings of animals, the latter with human beings, and all pointing a moral in the most uncompromising manner.

Meanwhile, the short poetic story in the form of romance or lay was making its way into favour and was well established towards the end of the thirteenth century. Of the earliest examples the best is that known as the *Lay of Sir Orfeo*, a variant on the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. Another variety of short tale of the period is the *fabliau*, which might be fitly described as the precursor of Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* and the ancestor of the *novella*, but of which very few examples survived, one of the most remarkable and typical being *The*

Vox and The Wolf of the second half of the thirteenth century, really an episode of the old romance of Reynard. So we pass by way of what may be described as Langland's collection of *fabliaux* to Gower and Chaucer, remembering also, in passing, that the folk-tale passed from mouth to mouth played a great part in pre-printing days in keeping alive the love of a tale among young and old alike.

Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1383 or 4) is really a collection of short stories in verse directly illustrating ethics and doctrine, and inferior to the *Canterbury Tales* in that they are faulty as studies of character and weighed down by the moralising which surrounds them. Chaucer is the beginner of story-telling as a fine art. He draws upon the old material, but like Shakespeare, he knows how to put new wine into old bottles. He uses all the types already in existence, devotional story, religious *exemplum*, fable, epilogue and *fabliau*, but shows his outstanding merit by his humanity, versatility and humour, which are inexhaustible, as well as by his ripe and mellow presentation of character, clear, rounded and complete, his rich description, pointed comment, lyrical feeling and well-wrought plot.

Between Chaucer and the Elizabethans the short story languished in England, except for the translation of the *Gesta Romanorum*, two tales by Lydgate and a few by Occleve, but flourished in Scotland, where Robert Henryson succeeded to the reputation won by Chaucer as a teller of short stories. His *Testament of Cresseid* is full of a tender pathos rarely equalled and never excelled in story-telling, and his quaint, simple, rythmic, delicately-constructed *Fables* are a noteworthy contribution to the class of literature we are considering, combining a little of the didactic with a great deal of the flavour and atmosphere of the story told for pleasure.

After the fifteenth century narrative drifted to prose, except for the ballads which kept alive the short tale in verse, but the early prose works like Berner's *Froissart* and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* were works of great length, though some critics have classed them, with some amount of justification, as collections of short stories. But in Italy the Renaissance produced a new kind of short story known as the *novella*, which is best represented by the tales of Boccaccio's *Decamekon*. The *novella* was brief, pungent and varied in character. It was soon imitated in France, where it appeared as the *conte*, and later in Elizabethan England, where it took on a character in

keeping with the race and time, being encumbered with a great deal of moralising, classical learning and rhetoric, and occasionally with Puritan propaganda. Painter, Green, Deloney, Ford, Fenton, Rich and others produced collections which were enormously popular. Rich's *Farewell to Militarie Profession* was "forged onely for delight" and certainly achieves its object as a careful reading of "Antonius and Silvio," given in this volume, will show, while another Elizabethan story which immediately follows shows how Thomas Deloney, the silk weaver, made real literature out of simple stories of the common people. The Euphuists, especially Pettie, Green, and Lyly, also used the short story for the exhibition of their artificial and tedious method of writing.

By the end of the sixteenth century the Italian *novella* had perished under an overweight of extraneous matter, and its place had been taken in popular regard by the long pompous romance, the short essay such as those of Bacon, or the "characters" of Sir Thomas Overbury, who revived a literary form of Theophrastus and Lucian. With regard to story writing the pens of English writers now needed more room, and we come to the birth of the novel. It was necessary for themes and characters to be worked out in full detail before narrative could be once more cultivated in miniature.

During the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the novel was developing in size and quality, and the short story was comparatively neglected; but Defoe, Addison, Steele, Sterne, Hawkesworth and Goldsmith tried their hands at this form of narration, the first named exhibiting in the tale here given, viz., "In Defence of His Right," many of the characteristics of the modern story, while the example selected from Hawkesworth's work is of special interest, as it shows the writer striving to cast off the classical shackles of his time and break into a freer mode of expression. Goldsmith is a stylist of a much higher order, but he still adheres in the example given to the formal style of the Johnsonian epoch.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the short story is a poor thing from the point of view of form, but many examples abound, and this type of literature was so very popular that a good number of examples have been chosen in order to show the taste of the period; while the examples taken from the works of De Quincey and Rossetti are included to show how these two masters of romantic mysticism deal with the short narrative. The later decades of the nineteenth

century saw the full development and fruition of the short tale. We have lost some of the romantic atmosphere of the old romance, the aroma of the old chronicles, and folk-lore, the ballad and the story poem, but we have gained greatly in power of delicate delineation, characterisation and what might be called focus. More than this, we have gained in rightness of vision, if at times it be too conscious, and we have more of spiritual outlook and discernment. Nor do the best modern examples of the short story show any decline in imaginative power and creativeness, for such stories as are written by W. H. Hudson, Joseph Conrad and Walter de la Mare set the mind roaming in mystic realms that have a spiritual foundation which had no counterpart in the earlier stories. An endeavour has been made to render the modern examples as varied as possible, and the critic will of course remember, that copyright considerations have shut out some of the finest products in this department of literature.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INTRODUCTION		vii
THE GREEN KNIGHT	*Traditional—(Retold by Ernest Rhys)*	1
TOM TIT TOT	*English Folk Lore*	15
APOLONIUS AND SILLA	*Barnaby Rich*	20
SIR SIMON EYER	*Thomas Deloney*	38
IN DEFENCE OF HIS RIGHT	*Daniel Defoe*	54
A STORY OF AN HEIR	*The "Spectator"*	64
THE WEDDING OF JENNY DISTAFF	*Richard Steele*	68
LE FEVRE	*Laurence Sterne*	72
MARIA	*Laurence Sterne*	79
THE STORY OF MELISSA	*John Hawkesworth*	84
THE DISABLED SOLDIER	*Oliver Goldsmith*	96
THE TAPESTRIED CHAMBER	*Sir Walter Scott*	101
THE HAUNTED SHIPS	*Allan Cunningham*	114
SAVANNAH-LA-MAR	*Thomas de Quincey*	129
LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW	*Thomas de Quincey*	131
THE FRESHWATER FISHERMAN	*Mary Russell Mitford*	137
THE LOVE QUARREL	*Agnes Strickland*	153
DORATHEA	*Mrs. Gore*	171
GRIZEL COCHRANE	*J. M. Wilson*	178
THE OLD MAN'S TALE ABOUT THE QUEER CLIENT	*Charles Dickens*	184
HAND AND SOUL	*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*	195
MRS. MARTIN'S COMPANY	*Jane Barlow*	208
THE HALF-BROTHERS	*Mrs. Gaskell*	220
MARKHEIM	*R. L. Stevenson*	230
THE VEILED PORTRAIT	*James M'Govan*	246
THE SONG OF THE MINSTER	*William Canton*	258
MR. SAMPSON	*Charles Lee*	262
DO SEEK THEIR MEAT FROM GOD	*C. G. D. Roberts*	278
THE ESSENCE OF A MAN	*Alan Sullivan*	283

		PAGE
A Pair of Hands	*Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch*	290
The Story of a Piebald Horse .	*W. H. Hudson*	302
The Creatures	*Walter de la Mare*	311
Bachelors	*Hugh Walpole*	321
The Prince Consort . . .	*Anthony Hope*	332
The Three Strangers . . .	*Thomas Hardy*	339
Spindleberries	*John Galsworthy*	360

For permission to use copyright stories the following acknowledgments are due: to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for leave to use the text of Deloney's stories as prepared by Mr. F. O. Mann in his edition of 1912; to the executors of Miss Jane Barlow for *Mrs. Martin's Company*; to Messrs. Chatto and Windus for R. L. Stevenson's *Markheim* from "The Merry Men"; to Mr. William Canton for *The Song of the Minster* from "A Child's Book of Saints"; to Mr. Charles Lee for *Mr. Sampson* from "Our Little Town" (Dent and Sons Ltd.); to Mr. Chas. G. D. Roberts for *Do Seek their Meat from God*; to Mr. Alan Sullivan for *The Essence of a Man* from "Oul-i-but and Other Stories" (Dent and Sons Ltd.); to Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch and Messrs. Cassell and Co., Ltd., for *A Pair of Hands* from "Old Fires and Profitable Ghosts"; to Mr. W. H. Hudson for *The Tale of a Piebald Horse* from "Tales of the Pampas"; to Mr. Walter de la Mare for *The Creatures*; to Mr. Hugh Walpole and Messrs. Methuen and Co., Ltd., for *Bachelors* from "Methuen's Annual, 1914"; to Mr. Anthony Hope and Messrs. Methuen and Co., Ltd., for *The Prince Consort* from "Tales of Two People"; to Mr. Thomas Hardy for *The Three Strangers* from "Wessex Tales"; and to Mr. John Galsworthy and Messrs. W. Heinemann for *Spindleberries* from "Tatterdemalion."

ENGLISH
SHORT STORIES

THE GREEN KNIGHT

TRADITIONAL

I

When Arthur was King of Britain, and so reigned, it befell one winter-tide he held at Camelot his Christmas feast, with all the knights of the Round Table, full fifteen days. All was joy then in hall and chamber; and when the New Year came, it was kept with great joy. Rich gifts were given and many lords and ladies took their seats at the table, where Queen Guenever sat at the king's side, and a lady fairer of form might no one say he had ever before seen. But King Arthur would not eat nor would he long sit, until he should have witnessed some wondrous adventure. The first course was served with a blowing of trumpets, and before each two guests were set twelve dishes and bright wine, for there was no want of anything.

Scarcely had the first course commenced, when there rushed in at the hall-door a knight,—the tallest on earth he must have been. His back and breast were broad, but his waist was small. He was clothed entirely in green, and his spurs were of bright gold; his saddle was embroidered with birds and flies, and the steed that he rode upon was green. Gaily was the knight attired; his great beard, like a green bush, hung on his breast. His horse's mane was decked with golden threads, and its tail bound with a green band; such a horse and such a knight were never before seen. It seemed that no man might endure the Green Knight's blows, but he carried neither spear nor shield. In one hand he held a holly bough, and in the other an axe, the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, and the handle was encased in iron, curiously graven with green.

Thus arrayed, the Green Knight entered the hall, without saluting anyone, and asked for the governor of the company, and looked about him for the most renowned of them. Much they marvelled to see a man and a horse as green as grass; never before had they seen such a sight as this; they were afraid to answer, and were as silent as if sleep had taken hold of them, some from fear, others from courtesy. King Arthur, who was never afraid, saluted the Green Knight, and bade him welcome. The Green Knight said that he would not tarry; he was seeking the most valiant, that he might prove him. He came in peace; but he had a halberd at home and a helmet too. King Arthur assured him that he should not fail to find an opponent worthy of him.

"I seek no fight," said the knight; "here are only beardless children; here is no man to match me; still, if any be bold enough to strike a stroke for another, this axe shall be his, but I shall give him a stroke in return within a twelvemonth and a day!"

Fear kept all silent; while the knight rolled his red eyes about and bent his gristly green brows. Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed:

"What, then—is this Arthur's Court? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned with a word of one man's speech!"

Arthur grew red for shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. He assured the knight that no one was afraid of his great words, and seized the axe. The Green Knight, stroking his beard, awaited the blow, and with a dry countenance drew down his green coat.

But thereupon Sir Gawayne begged the king to let him undertake the blow; he asked permission to leave the table, saying it was not meet that Arthur should take the game, while so many bold knights sat upon bench. Although the weakest, he was quite ready to meet the Green Knight. The other knights too begged Arthur to "give Gawayne the game." Then the king gave Gawayne, who was his nephew, his weapon and told him to keep heart and hand steady. The Green Knight inquired the name of his opponent, and Sir Gawayne told him his name, declaring that he was willing to give and receive a blow.

"It pleases me well, Sir Gawayne," says the Green Knight, "that I shall receive a blow from thy fist; but thou must swear that thou wilt seek me to receive the blow in return."

"Where shall I seek thee?" says Sir Gawayne; "tell me thy name and thy abode and I will find thee."

"When thou hast smitten me," says the Green Knight, "then tell I thee of my home and name; if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee. Take now thy grim weapon and let us see how thou strikest?"

"Gladly, sir, forsooth," quoth Sir Gawayne.

And now the Green Knight puts his long, green locks aside, and lays bare his neck, and Sir Gawayne strikes hard with the axe, and at one blow severs the head from the body. The head falls to the earth, and many treat it roughly, but the Green Knight never falters; he starts up, seizes his head, steps into the saddle, holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, and turns his horse about. Then lo! the head lifts up its eyelids, and addresses Sir Gawayne:

"Look thou, be ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek till thou findest me. Get thee to the Green Chapel, there to receive a blow on New Year's morn; fail thou never; come, or recreant be called." So saying, the Green Knight rides out of the hall, his head in his hand.

And now Arthur addresses the queen: "Dear dame, be not dismayed; such marvels well become the Christmas festival; I may now go to meat. Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe." The king and his knights sit feasting at the board, with all manner of meat and minstrelsy, till day is ended.

"But beware, Sir Gawayne!" said the king at its end, "lest thou fail to seek the adventure which thou hast taken in hand!"

II

LIKE other years, the months and seasons of this year pass away full quickly and never return. After Christmas comes Lent, and spring sets in, and warm showers descend. Then the groves become green; and birds build and sing for joy of the summer that follows; blossoms begin to bloom, and noble notes are heard in the woods. With the soft winds of summer, more beautiful grow the flowers, wet with dew-drops. But then harvest approaches, and drives the dust about, and the leaves drop off the trees, the grass becomes grey, and all ripens and rots. At last, when the winter winds come round again, Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey, and his vow to the Green Knight.

On All-Hallow's Day, Arthur makes a feast for his nephew's sake. After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle: "Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you, for I am bound on the morrow to seek the Green Knight."

Many noble knights, the best of the Court, counsel and comfort him, and much sorrow prevails in the hall, but Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. On the morn he asks for his arms; a carpet is spread on the floor, and he steps thereon. He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood; they set steel shoes on his feet, lap his legs in steel greaves; put on the steel habergeon, the well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate: while over all is placed the coat armour. His spurs are then fixed, and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. Thus attired the knight hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his Court. By that time his horse Gringolet was ready, the harness of which glittered like the gleam of the sun. Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head, and the circle around it was decked with diamonds; and they give him his shield with the "pentangle" of pure gold, devised by King Solomon as a token of truth; for it is called the endless knot, and well becomes the good Sir Gawayne, a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form. He was found faultless in his five wits; the image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield; in courtesy he was never found wanting, and therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.

And now Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all "Good-day"; he spurs his horse and goes on his way. All that saw him go, mourned in their hearts, and declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men, than to die by the hands of an elvish man.

Meanwhile, many a weary mile goes Sir Gawayne; now rides the knight through the realms of England; he has no companion but his horse, and no men does he see till he approaches North Wales. From Holyhead he passes into Wirral, where he finds but few that love God or man; he inquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, but can gain no tidings of him. His cheer oft changed before he found the chapel; many a cliff he climbed over, many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe. It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures with serpents, wolves and wild men; with bulls, bears and boars. Had he not been both brave and

good, doubtless he had been dead; the sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him. Thus in peril he travels till Christmas Eve and on the morn he finds himself in a deep forest, where were old oaks many a hundred; and many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold. Through rough ways and deep mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ and blessing himself he says, "Cross of Christ, speed me!"

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice, than he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill, the comeliest castle that knight ever owned, which shone as the sun through the bright oaks.

Forthwith Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate, and finds the drawbridge raised, and the gates fast shut; as he abides there on the bank, he observes the high walls of hard hewn stone, with battlements and towers and chalk-white chimneys; and bright and great were its round towers with their well-made capitals. Oh, thinks he, if only he might come within the cloister. Anon he calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight's errand.

"Good sir," says Gawayne, "ask the high lord of this house to grant me a lodging."

"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter. Thereupon is the drawbridge let down, and the gate opened wide to receive him; and he enters and his horse is well stabled, and knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword; the lord of the castle bids him welcome and they embrace each other. Gawayne looks on his host; a big bold one he seemed; beaver-hued was his broad beard, and his face as fell as the fire.

The lord then leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns a page to wait upon him. In this bright bower was noble bedding; the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems, and Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and floor. Here the knight doffed his armour, and put on rich robes, which well became him: and in troth a more comely knight than Sir Gawayne was never seen.

Then a chair was placed by the fireplace for him, and a mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, thrown over him; a table, too, was brought in, and the knight, having washed, was invited to sit to meat. He was served with numerous dishes, with fish baked and broiled, or boiled and seasoned with spices; full noble feast, and much mirth did he make, as he ate and drank.

Then Sir Gawayne, in answer to his host, told him he was of Arthur's Court; and when this was made known, great was the joy in the hall. Each one said softly to his mate: "Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, for we have amongst us the father of all nurture."

After dinner, the company go to the chapel, to hear the evensong of the great season. The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during the service. When his wife, accompanied by her maids, left her seat after the service, she appeared even fairer than Guenever. An older dame led her by the hand, and very unlike they were; for if the young one was fair the other was yellow, and had rough and wrinkled cheeks. The younger had a throat fairer than snow; the elder had black brows and bleared lips. With permission of the lord, Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, and the younger courteously kisses, and begs to be her servant. To the great hall then they go, where spices and wine are served: the lord takes off his hood, and places it on a spear: he who makes most mirth that Christmas-tide is to win it.

On Christmas morn, joy reigns in every dwelling in the world; so did it in the castle where Sir Gawayne now abode. The lord and the old ancient wife sit together, and Sir Gawayne sits by the wife of his host; it were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that abounded everywhere. Trumpets and horns give forth their merry notes, and great was the joy for three days.

St John's Day was the last day of the Christmas festival, and on the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the castle. Its lord thanked Sir Gawayne for the honour and pleasure of his visit, and endeavoured to keep him at his court. He desired also to know what had driven Sir Gawayne from Arthur's Court before the end of the Christmas holidays?

Sir Gawayne replied that "a high errand and a hasty one" had forced him to leave the Court. Then he asked his host whether he had ever heard of the Green Chapel? For there he had to be on New Year's Day, and he would as lief die as fail in his errand. The prince tells Sir Gawayne he will teach him the way, and that the Green Chapel is not more than two miles from the castle. Then was Gawayne glad, and he consented to tarry awhile at the castle; and its lord and castellan rejoiced too, and sent to ask the ladies to come and entertain their guest. And he asked Sir Gawayne to grant him one request that he would keep his chamber on the morrow's morn, as he

must be tired after his far travel. Meanwhile his host and the other men of the castle were to rise very early, and go a-hunting.

"Whatsoever," said his host, "I win in the wood shall be yours; and whatever hap be yours at home, I will as freely count as mine." And he gave Sir Gawayne in token a ring, which he was not to yield, no, not though it was thrice required of him by the fairest lady under heaven! To all this Sir Gawayne gladly agreed, and so with much cheer, a bargain was made between them; and as night drew on, each went early to his bed.

III

NEXT morn, full early before the day, all the folk of the castle up-rise, and saddle their horses, and truss their saddle-bags. The noble lord of the castle too arrays himself for riding, eats a sop hastily, and goes to mass. Before daylight, he and his men are on their horses; then the hounds are called out and coupled; three short notes are blown by the bugles, and a hundred hunters join in the chase. To their stations the deer-stalkers go, and the hounds are cast off, and joyously the chase begins.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights, but are soon driven back; the harts and bucks are allowed to pass, but the hinds and does are driven back to the shade. As they fly they are shot by the bowmen: the hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit, and those that escape the arrows are killed by the hounds. The lord waxes joyful in the chase, which lasted till the approach of night.

All this time, Sir Gawayne lay abed—and woke only to hear afar the baying of the hounds, and so to doze again. But at length there befell a knock at his door, and a damsel entered to bid him rise, and come to meat with her mistress. Straightway he arose, attired himself, put the fair ring on his finger, that his host had given him and descended to greet the lady of the castle.

"Good-morrow, fair sir," says she, "you are a late sleeper, I see!" She tells him, with a laughing glance, that she doubts if he really be Sir Gawayne that all the world worships: for he cares better to sleep than to hunt with the knights in the wood, or talk with the ladies in their bower.

"In good faith," quoth Sir Gawayne, "save this ring on my

finger, there is nought I would not yield thee in token of my service and thy courtesy."

The lady told him that if true courtesy were enclosed in himself, he would keep back nothing—no, not so much as a ring! But Sir Gawayne bethought him of his word to the lord of the castle; of his promise also to the Green Knight. He may not, he says, yield up his ring; but he will be forever her true servant.

We leave now the lady and Sir Gawayne, and turn to tell how the lord of the land and his men end their hunt in wood and heath. Of the killed a " quarry " they make; and set about " breaking " the deer, and take away the " assay " or fat; and rend off the hide. When all is ready, they feed the hounds, and then they make for home.

Anon Sir Gawayne hearing them approach the castle, goes out to meet his host. Then the lord commands all his household to assemble, and the venison to be brought before him; he calls Gawayne, and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase. When the knight has said that fairer venison he has not seen in winter—nay, not this seven year—his host doth bid him take the whole, according to the agreement between them made last night. Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return, and his host desires to know if he too has gotten much weal at home?

" Nay," says Sir Gawayne, " ask me no more of that! "

Thereupon the lord of the castle laughed, and they went to supper, where were dainties new, enough and to spare. Anon they were sitting by the hearth, while wine is carried round, and again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their compact, as before, and so they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.

Scarce had the cock cackled thrice on the morrow, when the lord was up, and again with his hunters and horns out and abroad, pursuing the chase. The hunters cheer on the hounds, which fall to the scent, forty at once; all come together by the side of a cliff, and look about on all sides, beating the bushes. Out there rushes a fierce wild boar, who fells three to the ground with the first thrust. Full quickly the hunters pursue him; however, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. The bowmen send their arrows after this wild beast, but they glide off, shivered in pieces. Enraged with the blows, he attacks the hunters: then the lord of the land blows his bugle, and pursues the boar.

All this time Sir Gawayne lies abed, as on the previous day,

according to his promise. And again, when he is summoned out of his late slumbers, the lady of the castle twits him with his lack of courtesy.

"Sir," says she, "if ye indeed be Sir Gawayne methinkest you would not have forgotten that which yesterday I taught!"

"What is that?" quoth he.

"That I taught you of giving," says she; "yet, you give not the ring as courtesy requires."

"Poor is the gift," he says, "that is not given of free will!"

But then the lady takes a ring from her own finger, and bids him to keep it. "And I would hear from you," she says, "some stories of beautiful dames, and of feats of arms and the deeds that become true knights."

Sir Gawayne says he has no sleight in the telling of such tales, and he may not take the ring she would give him, but he would for ever be her servant.

Meanwhile, the lord pursued the wild boar, that bit the backs of his hounds asunder, and caused the stoutest of his hunters to start back. At last the beast was too exhausted to run any more and entered a hole in a rock, by the side of a brook, the froth foaming at his mouth. None durst approach him, so many had he torn with his tusks. The knight, seeing the boar at bay, alights from his horse, and seeks to attack him with his sword; the boar rushes out upon the man, who, aiming well, wounds him in the side, and the wild beast is killed by the hounds.

Then was there blowing of horns and baying of hounds. One, wise in wood-craft, begins to unlace the boar, and hews off the head. Then he feeds his hounds; and the two halves of the carcase are next bound together and hung upon a pole. The boar's head is now borne before the lord of the castle, who hastens home.

Gawayne is called upon, when the hunt returns, to receive the spoil, and the lord of the land is well pleased when he sees him; and shows him the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth. "Such a brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says he never has seen. To Gawayne then the wild boar is given, according to the covenant; and in return he kisses his host, who declares his guest to be the best he knows.

Tables are raised aloft, cloths laid upon them, and waxen torches are lighted. With much mirth and glee, supper is served in the hall. When they had long played in the hall, they went to the upper chamber, where they drank and dis-

coursed. Sir Gawayne at length begs leave of his host to depart on the morrow; but his host swears to him that he must stay, and come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long before prime. So Gawayne consents to remain for another night; and full still and softly he sleeps throughout it.

Early in the morning the lord of the castle is up; after mass, a morsel he takes with his men to break his fast. Then were they all mounted on their horses before the hall-gates, and ready for the hunt. It was a clear, frosty morning when they rode off, and the hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, came upon the track of a fox, which was followed up by the hounds. And now they get sight of the game, and pursue him through many a rough grove. The fox at last leaps over a spinney, and by a rugged path seeks to get clear from the hounds; he comes upon one of the hunting-stations, where he is attacked by the dogs. However, he slips them, and makes again for the woods. Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds, and the hallooing of the hunters; there the fox was threatened, and called a thief. But Reynard was wily, and led them far astray over brake and spinney.

Meanwhile, Sir Gawayne, left at home, soundly sleeps within his comely curtains. At length the lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, comes to his chamber, opens a window, and reproaches him:

"Ah! man, how canst thou sleep; this morning is so clear?"

Sir Gawayne was, when she aroused him dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel, but he started up, and greeted his fair visitor. Again, as she had done before, she desired some gift by which to remember him when he was gone.

"Now, sir," she entreats him, "now before thy departing, do me this courtesy!"

Sir Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a far better gift than he can bestow. He has no men laden with trunks containing precious things.

Thereupon again the lady of the castle offers him a gold ring, but he refuses to accept it, as he has none that he is free to give in return. Very sorrowful was she on account of his refusal; she takes off her green girdle, and beseeches him to take it. Gawayne again refuses to accept anything, but promises, "ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant."

"Do you refuse it," says the lady, "because it is simple? Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses would highly prize it.

For he who is girded with this green girdle cannot be wounded or slain."

Thereupon Sir Gawayne thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel, and when she again earnestly presses him to take the girdle, he consents not only to take it, but to keep the possession of it a secret. Then she takes her leave; Gawayne hides the girdle, and then hies to the chapel, and asks pardon for any misdeeds he has ever done. When he returns to the hall, he makes himself so merry among the ladies with comely songs and carols, that they said: "This knight was so merry never before, since hither he came to the castle!"

Meanwhile the lord of the castle was still in the field; he had already slain the fox. He had spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove" and tried to strike him with his sword; but the fox was seized by one of the hounds. The rest of the hunters hastened thither, with horns full many, for it was the merriest meet that ever was heard; and carrying the fox's skin and brush they all ride home. The lord at last alights at his dear home, where he finds Sir Gawayne amusing the ladies; the knight comes forward and welcomes his host, and according to covenant kisses him thrice.

"My faith!" says the other, "ye have had much bliss! I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing but the skin of this foul fox, a poor reward for three such kisses." He then tells him how the fox was slain; and with much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry until the time came for them to part. Gawayne takes leave of his host, and thanks him for his happy sojourn. He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel. A servant is assigned him, and then he takes leave of the ladies, kissing them sorrowfully. They commend him to Christ. He then departs, thanking each one he meets for his service and solace; he retires to rest, but sleeps little, for much has he to think of on the morrow. Let him lie there, and be still awhile, and I will tell what next befell him.

IV

Now New Year's Day has drawn nigh, and the weather is stormy. Snow falls and the dale is full of deep drift. Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows; he calls for the chamberlain, and bids him bring his armour. Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon, and the knight then calls for his steed. While

he clothed himself in his rich garments, he forgot not the girdle, the lady's gift, but with it doubly girded his loins; he wore it not for its rich ornaments, "but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." All the people of the castle he thanked full oft, and then was his steed Gringolet arrayed, full ready to prick on. Sir Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him by all, and then he steps into the saddle from the mounting-stone, and says: "This castle to Christ I commend; may He give it ever good chance!"

Therewith the castle gates are opened, and the knight rides forth, and goes on his way accompanied by his guide. They ride by rocky ways and cliffs, where each hill wore a hat of cloud and a mist-cloak, and when it is full daylight, they find themselves "on a hill full high." Then his guide bade Sir Gawayne abide, saying:

"I have brought you hither, and ye are not now far from the appointed place. Full perilous is it esteemed, its lord is fierce and stern, his body is bigger than the best four in King Arthur's house; none passes by the Green Chapel that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand, for be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest or any man else, he kills them all. He has lived there long, and against his sore dints ye may not defend you; wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone, and go by some other region, and I swear faithfully that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a coward knight; to the chapel, therefore, he will go, though the lord thereof were the cruellest and strongest of men.

"Full well," says he, "can God devise how to save His true servants!"

"Marry," quoth the other, "since it pleases thee to lose thy life, take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side, till thou come to the bottom of the valley. Look a little to the left, and thou shalt see the chapel itself and the man that guards it."

Having thus spoken, the guide takes leave of the knight. "By God's grace," says Sir Gawayne, "I will neither weep nor groan. To God's will I am full ready to bow!" So on he rides, through the dale, and eagerly looks about him. He sees however, no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks, no chapel can he discern anywhere. At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream; thither he goes, alights, and fastens

his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks round the hill, looking for the chapel, and debating with himself what it might be, and at last he comes upon an old cave in the crag. "Truly," he reflects, "a wild place is here—a fitting place for the Green Knight to make his devotions in evil fashion; if this be the chapel it is the most cursed kirk that ever I saw."

But with that, he hears a loud noise, from beyond the brook. It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone, and whirred like a mill-stream.

"Though my life I forego," says Gawayne, "no noise shall terrify me." And he cried aloud: "Who dwells here and will hold discourse with me?" Then he heard a loud voice commanding him to abide where he stood, and soon there came out of a hole, with a fell weapon—a Danish axe, quite new—the Green Knight clothed just as Gawayne saw him long before. When he reached the stream, he leapt over it, and striding on, he met Sir Gawayne without the least obeisance.

"God preserve thee!" he says, "as a true knight thou hast timed thy travel. Thou knowest the covenant between us, that on New Year's Day I should return thy blow. Here we are alone; have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once."

"By my faith," quoth Sir Gawayne, "I shall not begrudge thee thy will."

Then he shows his bare neck, and appears undaunted. The Green Knight seizes his grim weapon, and with all his force raises it aloft. As it came gliding down, Sir Gawayne shrank a little with his shoulders, then the other reproved him, saying, "Thou art not that Gawayne that is so good esteemed, for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. I never flinched when thou struckest; my head flew to my foot, yet I never fled; wherefore I ought to be called the better man."

"I flinched once," says Gawayne, "but will no more. Bring me to the point; deal me my death-blow at once."

"Have at thee, then," says the other, and with that, prepares to aim the fatal blow. Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone.

"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must strike thee, since thy heart is whole."

"Strike on," says the other. Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike, and lets fall his axe on the bare neck of Sir Gawayne. The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed. When Gawayne saw the blood on the snow, he unsheathed his sword, and thus he spake:

"Cease, man, of thy blow. If thou givest me any more, blow for blow shall I requite thee! We agreed only upon one stroke."

The Green Knight rested on his axe, looked at Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless, and addressed him as follows:

"Bold knight, be not so wroth, I promised thee a stroke, and thou hast it. Be satisfied; I could have dealt worse with thee; I menaced thee first with one blow for the covenant between us on the first night. Another I aimed at thee because of the second night. A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm. Thou failed at the third time, and therefore take thee that stroke, for my girdle (woven by my wife) thou wearest. I know thy secret, and my wife's gift to thee, for I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee: but yet thou sinnedst a little, since thou tookest the girdle to save thy skin and for love of thy life."

Sir Gawayne stands there confounded before the Green Knight.

"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"

Then he takes off the girdle, and throws it to the Green Knight, and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth. Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:

"Thou art confessed so clean, that I hold thee as free, as if thou hadst never been guilty. I give thee, Sir Gawayne, the gold-hemmed girdle as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel. Come again to my castle, and abide there for the remainder of the New Year's festival."

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne, "I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee! Commend me to your comely wife, who beguiled me; but though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused! God reward you for your girdle! I will wear it in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall prick me, one look upon this green band shall abate it. But tell me your right name, and I shall have done."

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Haut-desert, through the might of Morgan le Fay, the pupil of Merlin; she can tame even the haughtiest. It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table, hoping to grieve Queen Guenever, and cause her death through fear. Morgan le Fay is even thine aunt; therefore come to her, and make merry in my house."

But Sir Gawayne refused to return with the Green Knight. He bade him a courteous farewell, and then he turned Gringolet's

head again toward Arthur's hall. By wild ways and lonely places did he ride. Sometimes he harboured in a house by night, and sometimes he had to shift under the trees. The wound in his neck became whole, but he still carried about him the belt in token of his fault.

Thus Sir Gawayne comes again at last to the Court of King Arthur, and great was the joy of them all to see him. The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey, and Gawayne tells them of his adventures, and of the Green Knight's castle and the lady, and lastly, of the girdle that he wore. He showed them the cut in his neck, and as he groaned for grief and shame, the blood rushed to his face.

"Lo!" says he, handling the green girdle, "this is the band of blame, a token of my cowardice and covetousness. I must needs wear it as long as I live."

The king comforts the knight, and all the Court too. Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake, who evermore honoured it. Thus in Arthur's day this adventure befell. May He who bore the crown of thorns, bring us to His bliss! Amen.

Retold by Ernest Rhys.

"TOM TIT TOT"

ENGLISH FOLK-LORE

ONCE upon a time there were a woman, and she baked five pies. And when they come out of the oven, they was that overbaked the crust were too hard to eat. So she says to her darter:

"Maw'r,"[1] says she, "put you them there pies on the shelf, an' leave 'em there a little, an' they'll come again."—She meant, you know, the crust would get soft.

But the gal, she says to herself: "Well, if they'll come agin, I'll ate 'em now." And she set to work and ate 'em all, first and last.

Well, come supper-time, the woman she said: "Goo you, and git one o' them there pies. I dare say they've come agin now."

The gal she went an' she looked, and there warn't nothin'

[1] Lass, girl.

but the dishes. So back she come and says she: "Noo, they ain't come agin."

"Not none on 'em?" says the mother.

"Not none on 'em," says she.

"Well, come agin, or not come agin," says the woman, "I'll ha' one for supper."

"But you can't, if they ain't come," says the gal.

"But I can," says she. "Goo you and bring the best of em."

"Best or worst," says the gal, "I've ate 'em all, and you can't ha' one till that's come agin."

Well, the woman she were wholly bate,[1] and she took her spinnin' to the door to spin, and as she span she sang:

My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day.
My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day.

The king he were a-comin' down the street, an' he heard her sing, but what she sang he couldn't hear, so he stopped and said:

"What were that you was a-singing of, maw'r?"

The woman she were ashamed to let him hear what her darter had been a-doin', so she sang, 'stids[2] o' that:

My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day.
My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day.

"S'ars o' mine!" said the king, "I never heerd tell of any one as could do that."

Then he said: "Look you here, I want a wife, and I'll marry your darter. But look you here," says he, "'leven months out o' the year she shall have all the vittles she likes to eat, and all the gowns she likes to get, and all the company she likes to have; but the last month o' the year she'll ha' to spin five skeins every day, an' if she doon't, I shall kill her."

"All right," says the woman; for she thought what a grand marriage that was. And as for them five skeins, whan it came to the time, there'd be plenty o' ways of getting out of it, and likeliest, he'd ha' forgot about it.

Well, so they was married. An' for 'leven months the gal had all the vittles she liked to ate, and all the gowns she liked to get, and all the company she liked to have.

But when the time was gettin' oover, she began to think about them there skeins an' to wonder if he had 'em in mind.

[1] Beaten. [2] Instead.

But not one word did he say about 'em, an' she wholly thought he'd forgot 'em.

But the last day o' the last month he takes her to a room she'd never sets eyes on afore. There worn't nothing in it but a spinnin'-wheel and a stool. An' says he: "Now, my dear, here yow'll be shut in to-morrow with some vittles and some flax, and if you hain't spun five skeins by the night, your head will goo off."

An' awa' he went about his business.

Well, she were that frightened, she'd allus been such a useless mawther, that she didn't so much as know how to spin, an' what were she to do to-morrow, with no one to come nigh her to help her. She sat down on a stool in the kitchen, and lawk! how she did cry!

However, all on a sudden she heard a sort of a knockin' low down on the door. She upped and oped it, an' what should she see but a small little black thing with a long tail. That looked up at her right curious, an' that said:

"What are you a-cryin' for?"

"Wha's that to you?" says she.

"Never you mind," that said, "but tell me what you're a-cryin' for."

"That won't do me no good if I do," says she.

"You don't know that," that said, an' twirled that's tail round.

"Well," says she, "that won't do no harm, if that don't do no good," and she upped and told about the pies and the skeins, and everything.

"This is what I'll do," says the little black thing, "I'll come to your window every morning and take the flax and bring it spun at night."

"What's your pay?" says she.

That looked out o' the corner o' that's eyes, and that said: "I'll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, an' if you hain't guessed it afore the month's up, you shall be mine."

Well, she thought she'd be sure to guess that's name afore the month was up. "All right," says she, "I agree."

"All right," that says, an' lawk! how that twirled that's tail.

Well, the next day, the king he took her into the room, an' there was the flax an' the day's vittles.

"Now there's the flax," says he, "an' if that ain't spun up this night, off goes your head." An' then he went out an' locked the door.

He'd hardly gone when there was a knockin' on the window. She upped and she oped it, and there sure enough was the little old thing a-settin' on the ledge.

" Where's the flax? " says he.

" Here it be," says she. And she gonned [1] it to him.

Well, in the evening a knockin' came again to the window. She upped and she oped it, and there were the little old thing with five skeins of flax on his arm.

" Here te be," says he, and he gonned it to her.

" Now, what's my name? " says he.

" What, is that Bill? " says she.

" Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail.

" Is that Ned? " says she.

" Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail.

" Well, is that Mark? " says she.

" Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail harder an' away he flew.

Well, when her husband he come in, there was the five skeins ready for him. " I see I shan't have for to kill you to-night, my dear," says he; " you'll have your vittles and your flax in the mornin'," says he, an' away he goes.

Well, every day the flax an' the vittles they was brought, an' every day that there little black impet used for to come mornings and evenings. An' all the day the mawther she set a-trying for to think of names to say to it when it come at night. But she never hit on the right one. An' as it got towards the end o' the month, the impet that began for to look so maliceful, an' that twirled that's tail faster an' faster each time she gave a guess.

At last it came to the last day but one. The impet, that came at night along o' the five skeins, and that said:

" What, ain't you got my name yet? "

" Is that Nicodemus? " says she.

" Noo, t'ain't," that says.

" Is that Sammle? " says she.

" Noo, t'ain't," that says.

" A-well, is that Methusalem? " says she.

" Noo, t'ain't that neither," that says.

Then that looks at her with that's eyes like a coal o' fire, an' that says: " Woman, there's only to-morrow night, an' then you'll be mine! " An' away it flew.

Well, she felt that horrid. Howsomeover, she heard the king

[1] Gave.

a-comin' along the passage. In he came, an' when he see the five skeins, he says, says he:

" Well, my dear," says he, " I don't see but what you'll have your skeins ready to-morrow night as well, an' as I reckon I sha'n't have to kill you, I'll have supper in here to-night." So they brought supper an' another stool for him, and down the two they sat.

Well, he hadn't eat but a mouthful or so, when he stops an' begins to laugh.

" What is it? " says she.

" A-why," says he, " I was out a huntin' to-day, an' I got away to a place in the wood I'd never seen afore. An' there was an old chalk-pit. An' I heard a sort of a hummin', kind o'. So I got off my hobby,[1] an' I went right quiet to the pit, an' I looked down. Well, what should there be but the funniest little black thing you ever set eyes on. An' what was that a-doing on, but that had a little spinnin'-wheel, an' that were a-spinnin' wonderful fast, an' a-twirlin' that's tail. An' as that span, that sang:

Nimmy Nimmy Not
My name's TOM TIT TOT.

Well, when the mawther heard this, she fared as if she could ha' jumped out of her skin for joy, but she didn't say a word.

Next day that there little thing looked so maliceful when he came for the flax. And when night came, she heard that a-knockin' on the window panes. She oped the window, an' that come right in on the ledge. That were grinnin' from ear to ear an' Oo! that's tail were twirlin' round so fast.

" What's my name? " that says, as that gonned her the skeins.

" Is that Solomon? " she says, pretendin' to be afeard.

" Noo, t'ain't," that says, and that come further into the room.

" Well, is that Zebedee? " says she again.

" Noo, t'ain't," says the impet. An' then that laughed an' twirled that's tail till you couldn't hardly see it.

" Take time, woman," that says; " next guess, and you're mine." An' that stretched out that's black hands at her.

Well, she backed a step or two, an' she looked at it, and then she laughed out, and says she, a-pointing of her finger at it:

Nimmy Nimmy Not
Yar name's TOM TIT TOT.

Well, when that heard her, that shrieked awful and away that flew into the dark, and she never saw it no more.

From " Fairy Gold," edited by Ernest Rhys.

[1] Horse.

APOLONIUS AND SILLA

BARNABY RICH (1581)

DURING the tyme that the famous Citie of Constantinople remained in the handes of the Christians, emongst many other noble menne, that kepte their abidyng in that florishing citie, there was one whose name was Apolonius, a worthie duke, who beyng but a verie yong man, and euen then newe come to his possessions whiche were verie greate, leuied a mightie bande of menne, at his owne proper charges, with whom he serued against the Turke, duryng the space of one whole yere, in whiche tyme although it were very shorte, this yong duke so behaued hym selfe, as well by prowesse and valiaunce shewed with his owne handes, as otherwise, by his wisedome and liberalitie, vsed towardes his souldiors, that all the worlde was filled with the fame of this noble duke. When he had thus spent one yeares seruice, he caused his trompet to sounde a retraite, and gatheryng his companie together, and imbarkyng theim selues he sette saile, holdying his course towardes Constantinople: but beeyng vppon the sea, by the extremitie of a tempest whiche sodainly fell, his fleete was deseuered some one way, and some an other, but he hym selfe recouered the Ile of Cypres, where he was worthily receiued by Pontus duke and gouernour of the same ile, with whom he lodged, while his shippes were newe repairyng.

This Pontus that was lorde and gouernour of this famous ile, was an auncient duke, and had twoo children, a soonne and a daughter, his sonne was named Siluio, of whom hereafter we shall haue further occasion to speake, but at this instant he was in the partes of Africa, seruyng in the warres.

The daughter her name was Silla, whose beautie was so perelesse, that she had the soueraintie emongest all other dames, aswell for her beautie as for the noblenesse of her birthe. This Silla hauing heard of the worthinesse of Apolonius, this yong duke, who besides his beautie and good graces, had a certaine naturall allurement, that beeyng now in his companie in her fathers courte, she was so strangely attached with the loue of Apolonius, that there was nothyng might content her but his presence and sweete sight, and although she sawe no maner of hope, to attaine to that she moste desired: knowing

Apolonius to be but a geaste, and readie to take the benefite of the next winde, and to departe into a straunge countrey, whereby she was bereued of all possibilitie euer to see hym againe, and therefore striued with her self to leaue her fondenesse, but all in vaine, it would not bee, but like the foule whiche is once limed, the more she striueth, the faster she tieth her self. So Silla was now constrained perforce her will to yeeld to loue, wherefore from tyme to tyme, she vsed so greate familiaritie with hym, as her honour might well permitte, and fedde him with suche amourous baites as the modestie of a maide could reasonably afforde, whiche when she perceiued, did take but small effecte, feelyng her self so muche out raged with the extreamitie of her passion, by the onely countenaunce that she bestowed vpon Apolonius, it might haue been well perceiued, that the verie eyes pleaded vnto hym for pitie and remorse. But Apolonius commyng but lately from out of the feelde, from the chasyng of his enemies, and his furie not yet thoroughly desolved, nor purged from his stomacke, gaue no regarde to these amourous entisementes, whiche by reason of his youth, he had not been acquainted with all. But his minde ranne more to heare his pilotes bryng newes of a merrie winde, to serue his turne to Constantinople whiche in the ende came very prosperously: and giuing Duke Pontus heartie thankes for his greate entertainment, takyng his leaue of hym self, and the Ladie Silla his daughter, departed with his companie, and with a happie gaale ariued at his desired porte: gentlewomen accordyng to my promise, I will heare for breuities sake, omit to make repetition of the long and dolorous discourse recorded by Silla, for this sodaine departure of her Apolonius, knowyng you to bee as tenderly harted as Silla her self, whereby you maie the better coniecture the furie of her feuer.

But Silla the further that she sawe her self bereued of all hope, euer any more to see her beloued Apolonius, so much the more contagious were her passions, and made the greater speede to execute that she had premeditated in her mynde, whiche was this: emongest many seruauntes that did attend vppon her, there was one whose name was Pedro, who had a long time waited vpon her in her chamber, whereby she was well assured of his fidelitie and trust: to that Pedro therefore she bewraied first the feruencie of her loue borne to Apolonius, coniuring him in the name of the Goddes of Loue her self, and bindyng hym by the duetie that a seruante ought to have, that tendereth his mistresse safetie and good likyng, and desiryng hym with

teares tricklyng doune her cheekes, that he would giue his consent to aide and assiste her, in that she had determined, whiche was for that she was fully resolued to goe to Constantinople, where she might againe take the vewe of her beloued Apolonius, that hee accordyng to the trust she had reposed in hym, would not refuse to giue his consent, secretly to conuaye her from out her fathers courte accordyng as she should giue hym direction, and also to make hym self partaker of her iourney, and to waite vpon her till she had seen the ende of her determination.

Pedro perceiuying with what vehemencie his ladie and mistresse had made request vnto hym, albeeit he sawe many perilles and doubtes, dependyng in her pretence, notwithstandyng, gaue his consent to be at her disposition, promisyng her to further her with his beste aduice, and to be readie to obeye whatsoeuer she would please to commaunde him. The match beyng thus agreed vpon, and all thynges prepared in a readinesse for their departure: it happened there was a gallie of Constantinople, readie to departe, whiche Pedro vnderstandyng came to the captaine, desiryng him to haue passage for hym self, and for a poore maide that was his sister, whiche were bounde to Constantinople vpon certain vrgent affaires, to whiche request, the captaine graunted, willyng hym to repare aborde with all speede, because the winde serued hym presently to departe.

Pedro now commyng to his mistres and tellyng her how he had handeled the matter with the captaine: she likyng verie well of the deuise, disguisyng her self into verie simple atyre, stole awaie from out her fathers court, and came with Pedro, whom now she calleth brother aboarde the galleye, where all thynges beyng in readinesse and the winde seruyng verie well, they launched forthe with their oores, and set saile, when thei were at the sea, the captaine of the galleye takyng the vewe of Silla, perceiuyng her singular beautie, he was better pleased in beholdyng of her face, then in takyng the height either of the sunne or starre, and thinkyng her by the homelinesse of her apparell, to be but some simple maiden, callyng her into his cabin, he beganne to breake with her after the sea fashion, desiryng her to vse his owne cabin for her better ease: and duryng the tyme that she remained at the sea, she should not want a bedde, and then wisperyng softly in her eare, he saied, that for want of a bedfellow, he hym self would supplie that rome. Silla not beyng acquainted with any suche talke, blusshed

for shame, but made hym no aunswere at all, my captaine feelyng suche a bickeryng within him self, the like whereof he had never indured vpon the sea: was like to bee taken prisoner aboard his owne shippe, and forced to yeeld hym self captiue without any cannon shot, wherefore to salue all sores, and thinkyng it the readiest waie to speed, he began to breake with Silla in the waie of mariage, tellyng her how happie a voiage she had made, to fall into the likyng of suche a one as himself was, who was able to keepe and maintaine her like a gentilwoman, and for her sake would likewise take her brother into his fellowship, whom he would by some meanes preferre in suche sorte, that bothe of theim should haue good cause to thinke them selues thrise happie, she to light of suche a housbande, and he to light of suche a brother. But Silla, nothyng pleased with these prefermentes, desired hym to cease his talke, for that she did thinke her self indeede to bee to vnworthie suche a one as he was, neither was she minded yet to marrie, and therefore desired hym to fixe his fancie vppon some that were better worthie than her self was, and that could better like of his curtesie then she could dooe, the captaine seeyng hymself thus refused, beyng in a greate chafe, he saied as followeth:

Then seeyng you make so little accompte of my curtesie, proffered to one that is so far vnworthie of it, from henceforthe I will vse the office of my aucthoritie, you shall knowe that I am the captaine of this shippe, and haue power to commaunde and dispose of thynges at my pleasure, and seyng you haue so scornfully reiected me to be your loiall housbande, I will now take you by force, and vse you at my will, and so long as it shall please me, will kepe you for myne owne store, there shall be no man able to defende you, not yet to perswade me from that I have determined. Silla with these wordes beyng stroke into a great feare, did thinke it now too late, to rewe her rashe attempte, determined rather to dye with her owne handes, then to suffer herself to be abused in suche sorte, therefore she moste humbly desired the captaine so muche as he could to saue her credite, and seyng that she must needes be at his will and disposition, that for that present he would depart, and suffer her till night, when in the darke he might take his pleasure, without any maner of suspition to the residue of his companie. The captaine thinking now the goole to be more then half wonne, was contented so farre to satisfie her request, and departed out leavyng her alone in his cabin.

Silla, beyng alone by her self, drue out her knife readie to strike her self to the harrt, and fallyng vpon her knees, desired God to receiue her soule, as an acceptable sacrifice for her follies, which she had so wilfully committed, crauyng pardon for her sinnes, and so forthe continuyng a long and pitifull reconciliation to God, in the middest whereof there sodainly fell a wonderfull storme, the terrour whereof was suche, that there was no man but did thinke the seas would presently haue swallowed them, the billowes so sodainly arose with the rage of the winde, that thei were all glad to fall to heauing out of water, for otherwise their feeble gallie had neuer bin able to haue brooked the seas; this storme continued all that daie and the next night, and thei beyng driuen to put romer before the winde to keepe the gallie a hed the billowe, were driuen vppon the maine shore, where the gallie brake all to peeces, there was euery man prouidyng to saue his own life, some gat vpon hatches, boordes, and caskes, and were driuen with the waues to and fro, but the greatest nomber were drouned, amongst the whiche Pedro was one, but Silla her self beyng in the caben as you have heard, tooke holde of a chest that was the captaines, the whiche by the onely prouidence of God brought her safe to the shore, the which when she hed recouered, not knowyng what was become of Pedro her manne, she deemed that bothe he and all the rest had been drouned, for that she sawe no bodie vppon the shore but her self, wherefore, when she had a while made greate lamentations, complainyng her mishappes, she beganne in the ende to comforte herselfe with the hope, that she had to see her Apolonius, and found such meanes that she brake open the chest that brought her to lande, wherin she found good store of coine, and sondrie sutes of apparell that were the captaines, and now to preuent a nomber of iniuries, that might bee proffered to a woman that was lefte in her case, she determined to leaue her own apparell, and to sort her self into some of those sutes, that beyng taken for a man, she might passe through the countrie in the better safetie, & as she changed her apparell, she thought it likewise conuenient to change her name, wherefore not readily happenyng of any other, she called her self Siluio, by the name of her owne brother, whom you haue heard spoken of before.

In this maner she trauailed to Constantinople, where she enquired out the palace of the Duke Apolonius, and thinkyng her self now to be both fitte and able to plaie the seruing-man, she presented her self to the duke crauyng his seruice, the duke verie willyng to giue succour vnto strangers, perceiuyng him to

bee a proper smogue young man, gaue hym entertainment: Silla thought her self now more then satisfied for all the casualties that had happened vnto her in her journey, that she might at her pleasure take but the vew of the Duke Apolonius, and aboue the reste of his seruauntes was verie diligent and attendaunt vppon hym, the whiche the duke perceiuyng, beganne likewise to growe into good likyng with the diligence of his man, and therefore made hym one of his chamber, who but Siluio then was moste neate about hym, in helpyng of hym to make hym readie in a mornyng in the settyng of his ruffes, in the keepyng of his chamber, Siluio pleased his maister so well that aboue all the reste of his seruauntes aboute him, he had the greatest credite, and the duke put him moste in trust.

At this verie instaunt, there was remainyng in the cittie a noble dame a widowe, whose houseband was but lately deceased, one of the noblest men that were in the partes of Grecia, who left his lady and wife large possessions and greate liuinges. This ladies name was called Iulina, who besides the aboundance of her wealth, and the greatnesse of her reuenues, had likewise the soueraigntie of all the dames of Constantinople for her beautie. To this Ladie Iulina, Apolonius became an earnest suter, and accordyng to the maner of woers, besides faire woordes, sorrowfull sighes, and piteous countenaunces, there must bee sendyng of louyng letters, chaines, bracelets, brouches, rynges, tablets, gemmes, juels, and presentes I knowe not what: so my duke, who in the tyme that he remained in the Ile of Cypres, had no skill at all in the arte of loue, although it were more then half proffered vnto hym, was now become a scholler in loues schoole, and had alreadie learned his first lesson, that is, to speak pitifully, to looke ruthfully, to promise largely, to serue diligently, and to please carefully: now he was learnyng his seconde lesson, that is to reward liberally, to giue bountifully, to present willyngly, and to write lovyngly. Thus Apolonius was so busied in his newe studie, that I warrant you there was no man that could chalenge hym for plaiyng the truant, he followed his profession with so good a will: and who must bee the messenger to carrie the tokens and loue letters, to the Ladie Iulina, but Siluio his manne, in hym the duke reposed his onely confidence to goe betweene hym and his ladie.

Now gentilwomen, doe you thinke there coulde haue been a greater torment devised wherewith to afflicte the harte of Silla, then her self to bee made the instrumente to woorke her owne mishapp, and to plaie the atturney in a cause, that made so

muche againste her self. But Silla altogether desirous to please her maister, cared nothyng at all to offende her selfe, followed his businesse with so good a will, as if it had been in her owne preferment.

Iulina now hauyng many tymes, taken the gaze of this yong youth Siluio, perceiuing hym to bee of such excellente perfecte grace, was so intangeled with the often sight of this sweete temptation, that she fell into as greate a likyng with the man, as the maister was with her self: and on a tyme Siluio beyng sent from his maister, with a message to the Ladie Iulina, as he beganne very earnestly to solicet in his maisters behalfe, Iulina interruptyng hym in his tale, saied: Siluio it is enough that you haue saied for your maister, from henceforthe either speake for your self, or saie nothyng at all. Silla abashed to heare these wordes, began in her minde to accuse the blindnesse of loue, that Iulina neglectyng the good will of so noble a duke woulde preferre her love vnto suche a one, as nature it self had denaied to recompence her likyng.

And now for a tyme, leauyng matters dependyng as you haue heard, it fell out that the right Siluio indeede (whom you haue heard spoken of before, the brother of Silla,) was come to his fathers courte into the Ile of Cyprus, where vnderstanding, that his sister was departed, in maner as you haue heard coniectured, that the very occasion did proceade of some liking had betwene Pedro her man (that was missyng with her) and her self, but Siluio who loved his sister, as dearly as his owne life, and the rather for that she was his naturall sister, bothe by father and mother, so the one of theim was so like the other, in countenaunce and fauour, that there was no man able to descerne the one from the other by their face, sauyng by their apparell, the one beyng a man, the other a woman.

Siluio therefore vowed to his father, not onely to seeke out his sister Silla, but also to reuenge the villanie, whiche he conceiued in Pedro, for the carriyng awaie of his sister; and thus departyng, hauyng trauailed through many cities and tounes, without hearyng any maner of newes of those he wente to seeke for, at the laste he arriued at Constantinople, where as he was walkyng in an euenyng for his owne recreation, on a pleasaunte greene yarde, without the walles of the citie, he fortuned to meete with the Ladie Iulina, who likewise had been abroad to take the aire, and as she sodainly caste her eyes vppon Siluio, thinkyng hym to bee her olde acquaintaunce, by reason thei were so like one an other, as you haue heard before, saied vnto

hym, Sir Siluio, if your haste be not the greater, I praie you let me haue a little talke with you, seyng I haue so luckely mette you in this place.

Siluio wonderyng to heare hym self so rightlie named, beeyng but a straunger, not of aboue twoo daies continuaunce in the citie, verie courteouslie came towardes her, desirous to heare what she would saie.

Iulina commaunding her traine somthyng to stande backe, saied as followeth. Seyng my good will and frendly loue, hath been the onely cause to make me so prodigall to offer, that I see is so lightly reiected, it maketh me to thinke, that men bee of this condition, rather to desire those thynges, whiche thei can not come by, then to esteeme or value of that, whiche bothe largely and liberallie is offered vnto theim, but if the liberalitie of my proffer, hath made to seme lesse the value of the thing that I ment to present, it is but in your owne c[on]ceipt, consideryng how many noble men there hath been here before, and be yet at this present, whiche hath bothe serued, sued, and moste humbly intreated, to attaine to that, whiche to you of my self, I haue freely offred, and I perceiue is dispised, or at the least verie lightly regarded.

Siluio wonderyng at these woordes, but more amazed that she could so rightlie call him by his name, could not tell what to make of her speeches, assuryng hym self that she was deceiued, and did mystake hym, did thinke notwithstandyng, it had been a poincte of greate simplicitie, if he should forsake that, whiche fortune had so fauourably proffered vnto hym, perceiuyng by her traine, that she was some ladie of greate honour, and vewyng the perfection of her beautie, and the excellencie of her grace and countenaunce, did thinke it vnpossible that she should be despised, and therefore aunswered thus:

Madame, if before this tyme, I haue seemed to forgett my self, in neglectyng your courtesie, whiche so liberally you haue ment vnto me: please it you to pardon what is paste, and from this daie forewardes, Siluio remaineth readie preste to make suche reasonable amendes as his abilitie maie any waies permit, or as it shall please you to commaunde.

Iulina the gladdest woman that might bee, to heare these ioyfull newes, saied: then my Siluio see you faile not to morowe at night to suppe with me at my owne house, where I will discourse farther with you, what amendes you shall make me, to whiche request Siluio gaue his glad consente, and thus thei departed verie well pleased. And as Iulina did thinke the tyme

verie long, till she had reapte the fruite of her desire: so Siluio he wishte for haruest before corne could growe, thinkyng the tyme as long, till he sawe how matters would fall out, but not knowyng what ladie she might bee, he presently (before Iulina was out of sight) demaunded of one that was walkyng by, what she was, and how she was called, who satisfied Siluio in euery poincte, and also in what parte of the toune her house did stande, the whereby he might enquire it out.

Siluio thus departing to his lodging, passed the night with verie vnquiet sleapes, and the nexte mornyng his mynde ran so muche of his supper, that he neuer cared, neither for his breakfast, nor dinner, and the daie to his seemyng passed away so slowelie, that he had thought the statelie steedes had been tired, that drawe the chariot of the sunne, or els some other Iosua had commaunded them againe to stande, and wished that Phaeton had been there with a whippe.

Iulina on the other side, she had thought the clocke setter had plaied the knaue, the daie came no faster forewardes, but sixe a clocke beeyng once stroken, recouered comforte to bothe parties; and Siluio hastenyng hymself to the pallace of Iulina, where by her he was frendly welcomed, and a sumpteous supper beeyng made readie, furnished with sondrie sortes of delicate dishes, thei satte theim doune, passyng the supper tyme with amorous lokes, louyng countenaunces, and secret glaunces conueighed from the one to the other, whiche did better satisfie them, then the feedyng of their daintie dishes.

Supper tyme beeyng thus spent, Iulina did thinke it verie vnfitly, if she should tourne Siluio to go seeke his lodgyng in an euenyng, desired hym therefore, that he would take a bedde in her house for that night, and bringyng hym vp into a faire chamber, that was verie richely furnished, she founde suche meanes, that when all the reste of her housholde seruauntes were a bedde and quiet, she came her self to beare Siluio companie, where concludyng vppon conditions, that were in question betweene them, they passed the night with suche ioye and contentation, as might in that conuenient tyme be wished for; . . . but the mornyng approchyng, Iulina took her leaue, and conueighed her self into her owne chamber, and when it was faire daie light, Siluano makyng hym self readie, departed likewise about his affaires in the towne, debatyng with hymself how thynges had happened, beyng well assured that Iulina had mistaken hym, and therefore for feare of further euilles, determined to come no more there, but tooke his iourney towardes

other places in the partes of Grecia, to see if he could learne any tidynges of his sister Silla.

The duke Apolonius hauyng made a long sute and neuer a whit the nerer of his purpose, came to Iulina to craue her direct aunswere, either to accept of hym, and of suche conditions as he proffered vnto her, or els to giue hym his laste farewell.

Iulina, as you haue heard, had taken an earnest penie of an other, whom he [she] had thought to be the dukes man, was at a controuersie in her self, what she might doe: one while she thought, seying her occasion serued so fitt to craue the duke's good will, for the mariyng of his manne, then againe, she could not tell what displeasure the duke would conceiue, in that she should seeme to preferre his man before hym self, did thinke it therefore beste to conceale the matter, till she might speake with Siluio, to vse his opinion how these matters should be handled, and herevpon resoluyng her self, desiryng the duke to pardon her speeches, saied as followeth:

Sir Duke, for that from this tyme forwardes I am no longer of my self, hauing giuen full power and authoritie ouer to an other, whose wife I now remaine by faithfull vowe and promise: and albeeit, I knowe the world will wonder, when thei shall vnderstande the fondnesse of my choice, yet I trust you your self will nothyng dislike with me, sithe I haue ment no other thing, then the satisfiyng of myne owne contentation and likyng.

The duke hearyng these woordes, aunswered: madam, I must then content my self, although against my wil, hauing the lawe in your owne handes, to like of whom you liste, and to make choise where it pleaseth you.

Iulina giuing the duke greate thankes, that would content himself with suche pacience, desired hym likewise, to giue his free consent and good will, to the partie whom she had chosen to be her housebande.

Naie surely madam (q[uoth] the duke) I will neuer giue my consent, that any other man shall enioye you but my self, I haue made too greate accompt of you, then so lightly to passe you awaie with my good will: but seeyng it lieth not in me to let you, hauyng (as you saie) made your owne choise, so from hence forwardes I leaue you to your owne likyng, alwaies willyng you well, and thus will take my leaue.

The duke departed towardes his owne house verie sorrowfull, that Iulina had thus serued hym, but in the meane space that the duke had remained in the house of Iulina, some of his

seruantes fell into talke and conference, with the seruantes of Iulina, where debatyng betwene them, of the likelihood of the mariage, betweene the duke and the ladie, one of the seruantes of Iulina saide: that he had neuer sawe his ladie and mistres, vse so good countenaunce to the duke hym self, as she had doen to Siluio his manne, and began to report with what familiaritie and courtesie she had receiued hym, feasted hym, and lodged hym, and that in his opinion, Siluio was like to speede before the duke or any other that were suters.

This tale was quickly brought to the duke hymself, who makyng better enquirie into the matter, founde it to be true that was reported, and better consideryng of the woordes, whiche Iulina had vsed towardes hymself, was verie well assured that it could be no other then his owne manne, that had thrust his nose so farre out of ioynte, wherefore without any further respect, caused hym to be thrust into a dongeon, where he was kept prisoner, in a verie pitifull plight.

Poore Siluio, hauyng gotte intelligence by some of his fellowes, what was the cause that the duke his maister did beare suche displeasure unto hym, deuised all the meanes he could, as well by meditation [mediation] by his fellowes, as otherwise by petitions, and supplications to the duke, that he would suspende his iudgemente, till perfecte proofe were had in the matter, and then if any maner of thyng did fall out againste him, wherby the duke had cause to take any greef, he would confesse hymself worthie not onely of imprisonmente, but also of most vile and shamefull death: with these petitions he daiely plied the duke, but all in vaine, for the duke thought he had made so good proofe, that he was throughlie confirmed in his opinion against his man.

But the Ladie Iulina wonderyng what made Siluio, that he was so slacke in his visitation, and why he absented hym self so long from her presence, beganne to thinke that all was not well, but in the ende, perceiuyng no decoction of her former surfette, receiued, as you haue heard, and assuryng her self to bee with child, fearyng to become quite bancroute of her honour, did thinke it more then tyme to seeke out a father, and made suche secret searche, and diligent enquirie, that she learned the truthe how Siluio, was kepte in prison, by the duke his maister, and mindyng to finde a present remedie, as well for the loue she bare to Siluio, as the maintainaunce of her credit and estimation, she speedily hasted to the pallace of the duke, to whom she saied as followeth:

Sir duke, it maie bee that you will thinke my commyng to your house in this sorte, doeth somethyng passe the limites of modestie, the whiche I protest before God, proceadeth of this desire, that the worlde should knowe how iustly I seke meanes to maintaine my honour, but to the ende I seeme not tedious with prolixitie of woordes, not to vse other then direct circumstaunces, knowe sir, that the loue I beare my onely beloued Siluio, whom I doe esteeme more then all the iewells in the worlde, whose personage I regard more then my owne life, is the onely cause of my attempted iourney, besechyng you, that all the whole displeasure, whiche I vnderstand you haue conceiued against hym, maie be imputed vnto my charge, and that it would please you louingly to deale with him, whom of my self I haue chosen rather for the satisfaction of mine honest likyng, then for the vaine preheminences or honourable dignities looked after by ambicious myndes.

The duke hauing heard this discourse, caused Siluio presently to be sent for, and to be brought before hym, to whom he saied: had it not been sufficient for thee, when I had reposed myself in thy fidelitie, and the trustinesse of thy seruice, that thou shouldest so traiterously deale with me, but since y^t tyme haste not spared, still to abuse me with so many forgeries, and periured protestations, not onely hatefull vnto me, whose simplicitie thou thinkest to bee suche that by the plotte of thy pleasaunt tongue, thou wouldest make mee beleeue a manifest vntrothe, but most habominable bee thy doynges in the presence and sight of God, that hast not spared to blaspheme his holy name, by callyng hym to bee a witnesse to maintaine thy leasynges, and so detestably wouldest forsweare thyself, in a matter that is so openly knowne.

Poore Siluio whose innocencie was suche y^t he might lawfully sweare, seing Iulina to be there in place, aunswered thus:

Moste noble duke, well vnderstandyng your conceiued greefe, moste humbly I beseche you patiently to heare my excuse, not mindyng thereby to aggrauate or heape vp youre wrathe and displeasure, protestyng before God, that there is nothyng in the worlde, whiche I regarde so much, or dooe esteeme so deare, as your good grace and fauour, but desirous that your grace should know my innocencie, and to cleare my self of suche impositions, wherewith I knowe I am wrongfully accused, whiche as I vnderstande should be in the practisyng of the Ladie Iulina, who standeth here in place, whose acquitaunce for my better discharge, now I moste humbly craue, protestyng before the

almightie God, that neither in thought, worde, nor deede, I haue not otherwise vsed my self, then accordyng to the bonde and duetie of a seruaunte, that is bothe willing & desirous, to further his maisters sutes, which if I haue otherwise saied then that is true, you Madame Iulina, who can verie well deside in the depthes of all this doubte, I moste humbly beseche you to certifie a trothe, if I haue in any thyng missaied, or haue otherwise spoke, then is right and iust.

Iulina hauyng heard this discoorse whiche Siluio had made, perceiuing that he stoode in greate awe of the dukes displeasure, aunswered thus: think not my Siluio that my commyng hither is to accuse you of any misdemeanour towardes your maister, so I dooe not denaie, but in all suche imbassages wherein towardes me you haue been imployed, you haue vsed the office of a faithfull and trustie messenger, neither am I ashamed to confesse, that the first daie that mine eyes did beholde, the singuler behauiour, the notable curtesie, and other innumerable giftes wherwith my Siluio is endued, but that beyonde all measure my harte was so inflamed, that impossible it was for me, to quenche the feruente loue, or extinguishe the least parte of my conceiued torment, before I had bewraied the same vnto hym, and of my owne motion, craued his promised faithe and loialtie of marriage, and now is the tyme to manifest the same vnto the worlde, whiche hath been done before God, and betwene our selues: knowyng that it is not needefull, to keepe secret that, whiche is neither euill doen, nor hurtfull to any persone, therefore (as I saied before) Siluio is my housbande by plited faithe, whom I hope to obtaine without offence, or displeasure of any one, trustyng that there is no manne, that will so farre forget hym self, as to restraine that, whiche God hath left at libertie for euery wight, or that will seeke by crueltie, to force ladies to marrie otherwise, then accordyng to their owne likyng. Feare not then my Siluio to keepe your faith and promise, whiche you haue made vnto me, and as for the reste: I doubte not thynges will so fall out, as you shall haue no maner of cause to complaine.

Siluio amased to heare these woordes, for that Iulina by her speeche, semed to confirme that, whiche he moste of all desired to bee quite of, saied: who would haue thought that a ladie of so greate honour and reputation, would her self bee the embassadour, of a thyng so preiuditiall, and vncomely for her estate, what plighted promises be these which bee spoken of: altogether ignoraunt vnto me, whiche if it bee otherwise then I haue saied,

you sacred goddes consume me straight with flashyng flames of fire. But what woordes might I vse to giue credite to the truthe, and innocencie of my cause? Ah Madame Iulina! I desire no other testimonie then your owne honestie and vertue, thynking that you will not so muche blemishe the brightnesse of your honour, knowyng that a woman is or should be the image of curtesie, continencie, and shamfastnesse, from the whiche so sone as she stoopeth, and leaueth the office of her duetie and modestie, besides the degraduation of her honour, she thrusteth her self into the pitte of perpetuall infamie, and as I can not thinke you would so far forgette your self, by the refusall of a noble duke, to dimme the light of your renowne and glorie, whiche hitherto you haue maintained, emongest the beste and noblest ladies, by suche a one as I knowe my self to bee, too farre vnworthie your degree and callying, so must humbly I beseeche you to confesse a trothe, whereto tendeth those vowes and promises you speake of, which speeches bee so obscure vnto me, as I knowe not for my life how I might vnderstande them.

Iulina somethyng nipped with these speeches, saied, and what is the matter that now you make so little accoumpte of your Iulina, that beeyng my housbande in deede, haue the face to denaie me, to whom thou art contracted by so many solemne othes: what arte thou ashamed to haue me to thy wife? how muche oughtest thou rather to be ashamed to breake thy promised faithe, and to haue despised the holie and dreadfull name of God, but that tyme constraineth me to laye open that, whiche shame rather willeth I should dissemble and keepe secret, behold me then here Siluio whom thou haste gotten with childe, who if thou bee of suche honestie, as I trust for all this I shall finde, then the thyng is doen without preiudice, or any hurte to my conscience, consideryng that by the professed faithe, thou diddest accoumpt me for thy wife, and I receiued thee for my spouse and loyall housbande, swearying by the almightie God, that no other then you haue made the conquest and triumphe of my chastitie, whereof I craue no other witnesse then your self, and mine owne conscience. . . .

But now to returne to our Siluio, who hearyng an othe sworne so deuinely that he had gotten a woman with childe, was like to beleeue that it had bin true in very deede, but remembryng his owne impediment, thought it impossible that he should committe suche an acte, and therefore half in a chafe, he saied, what lawe is able to restraine the foolishe indescretion of a woman, that yeeldeth her self to her owne desires, what shame is able to

bridle or withdrawe her from her mynd and madnesse, or with what snaffell is it possible to holde her backe, from the execution of her filthinesse, but what abhomination is this, that a ladie of suche a house should so forget the greatnesse of her estate, the aliaunce whereof she is descended, the nobilitie of her deceased housbande, and maketh no conscience to shame and slaunder her self, with suche a one as I am, beyng so farre vnfit and vnsemely for her degree, but how horrible it is to heare the name of God so defased, that wee make no more acompt, but for the maintenaunce of our mischifes, we fear no whit at all to forsweare his holy name, as though he were not in all his dealinges moste righteous true and juste, and will not onely laie open our leasinges to the worlde, but will likewise punishe the same with moste sharpe and bitter scourges.

Iulina not able to indure hym to proceede any farther in his sermon, was alreadie surprised with a vehement greefe, began bitterly to crie out, vtteryng these speeches followyng:

Alas, is it possible that the soueraigne iustice of God, can abide a mischiefe so greate and cursed, why maie I not now suffer death, rather then the infamie whiche I see to wander before myne eyes. Oh happie and more then right happie had I bin, if inconstant fortune had not deuised this treason, wherein I am surprised and caught, am I thus become to be intangled with snares, and in the handes of hym, who inioiyng the spoyles of my honour, will openly depriue me of my fame, by makyng me a common fable to all posteritie in tyme to come. Ah traitour and discourtious wretche, is this the recompence of the honest and firme amitie which I have borne thee, wherin I haue deserued this discourtesie, by louing thee more then thou art able to deserue? Is it I, arrant theefe is it I, vppon whom thou thinkest to worke thy mischiues, doest thou think me no better worthe, but that thou maiest prodigally waste my honour at thy pleasure, didest thou dare to adventure vppon me, hauing thy conscience wounded with so deadly a treason: ah vnhappie and aboue all other most vnhappie, that haue so charely preserued myne honour, and now am made a praie to satisfie a yong mans lust, that hath coueted nothyng but the spoyle of my chastitie and good name.

Here withall the teares so gushed doune her cheekes, that she was not able to open her mouth to vse any farther speeche.

The duke who stoode by all this while, and heard this whole discourse, was wonderfully moued with compassion towardes Iulina, knowyng that from her infancie she had euer so honour-

ably vsed her self, that there was no man able to detect her of any misdemeanour, otherwise then beseemed a ladie of her estate, wherefore beyng fully resolued that Siluio his man had committed this villanie against her, in a greate furie drawyng his rapier, he saied vnto Siluio:

How canst thou (arrant theefe) shewe thy self so cruell and carelesse to suche as doe thee honour, hast thou so little regard of suche a noble ladie, as humbleth her self to such a villaine as thou art, who without any respecte either of her renowne or noble estate, canst be content to seeke the wracke and vtter ruine of her honour, but frame thy self to make such satisfaction as she requireth, although I knowe vnworthie wretche, that thou art not able to make her the least parte of amendes, or I sweare by god, that thou shalt not escape the death which I will minister to thee with myne owne handes, and therefore aduise thee well what thou doest.

Siluio hauyng heard this sharpe sentence, fell doune on his knees before the duke crauyng for mercie, desiryng that he might be suffered to speake with the Ladie Iulina aparte, promising to satisfie her accordyng to her owne contentation.

Well (q[uoth] the duke) I take thy worde, and there with all I aduise thee that thou performe thy promis, or otherwise I protest before God, I will make thee suche an example to the worlde, that all traitours shall tremble for feare, how they dooe seeke the dishonouryng of ladies.

But now Iulina had conceived so greate greefe against Siluio, that there was muche a dooe to perswade her to talke with hym, but remembryng her owne case, desirous to heare what excuse he could make, in the ende she agreed, and beyng brought into a place seuerally by them selues, Siluio beganne with a piteous voice to saie as followeth:

I knowe not madame, of whom I might make complaint, whether of you or of my self, or rather of fortune, whiche hath conducted and brought vs both into so greate aduersitie, I see that you receiue greate wrong, and I am condemned againste all right, you in perill to abide the brute of spightful tongues, and I in daunger to loose the thing that I moste desire; and although I could alledge many reasons to proue my saiynges true, yet I referre my self to the experience and bountie of your minde. And here with all loosing his garmentes doune to his stomacke, and shewed Iulina his bosom, surmountyng farre the whitenesse of snowe it self, saiyng: loe madame, behold here the partie whom you haue chalenged to

bee the father of your childe, see I am a woman the daughter of a noble duke, who onely for the loue of him, whom you so lightly haue shaken of, haue forsaken my father, abandoned my countrie, and in maner as you see am become a seruing man, satisfiyng my self, but with the onely sight of my Apolonius, and now madame, if my passion were not vehement, & my tormentes without comparison, I would wish that fained greefes might be laughed to scorne, & my desembled paines to be rewarded with floutes. But my loue beyng pure, my trauaile continuall, & my greefes endlesse, I trust madame you will not onely excuse me of crime, but also pitie my destresse, the which I protest I would still haue kept secrete, if my fortune would so haue permitted.

Iulina did now thinke her self to be in a worse case then euer she was before, for now she knewe not whom to chalenge to be the father of her child, wherfore, when she had told the duke the very certantie of the discou[r]se, which Siluio had made vnto her, she departed unto her owne house, with suche greefe and sorrowe, that she purposed neuer to come out of her owne doores againe aliue, to be a wonder and mocking stocke to y^e^ worlde.

But y^e^ duke more amased, to heare this straunge discourse of Siluio came vnto him, whom when he had vewed with better consideration, perceiued in deede that it was Silla, the daughter of Duke Pontus, and imbrasing her in his armes, he saied:

Oh the braunche of all vertue and the flowre of curtesie it self, pardon me I bes[e]che you of all suche discourtesies, as I haue ignorantlie committed towardes you: desiring you that without farther memorie of auncient greefes, you will accept of me, who is more ioyfull and better contented with your presence, then if the whole worlde were at my commaundement. Where hath there euer bin founde suche liberalitie in a louer, which hauyng been trained vp and nourished emongest the delicacies and banquettes of the courte, accompanied with traines of many faire and noble ladies liuing in pleasure, and in the middest of delightes, would so prodigallie aduenture your self, neither fearing mishapps, nor misliking to take suche paines, as I knowe you haue not been accustomed vnto. O liberalitie neuer heard of before! O facte that can neuer bee sufficiently rewarded! O true loue moste pure and vnfained: here with all sendyng for the moste artificiall woorkmen, he prouided for her sundrie sutes of sumpteous apparell, and the marriage daie appoincten, which was celebrated with greate triumphe through the whole

citie of Constantinople, euery one prasing the noblenesse of the duke, but so many as did behold the excellent beautie of Silla, gaue her the praise aboue all the rest of the ladies in the troupe.

The matter seemed so wonderfull and straunge that the brute was spreade throughout all the partes of Gretia, in so muche that it came to the hearyng of Siluio, who as you haue heard, remained in those partes to enquire of his sister, he beyng the gladdest manne in the worlde, hasted to Constantinople, where comming to his sister he was ioyfullie receiued, and moste louynglie welcomed, and entertained of the duke, his brother in lawe. After he had remained there twoo or three daies, the duke reuealed unto Siluio, the whole discourse how it happened, betweene his sister and the Ladie Iulina, and how his sister was chalenged, for gettying a woman with childe: Siluio blushyng with these woordes, was striken with greate remorse to make Iulina amendes; vnderstanding her to bee a noble ladie, and was lefte defamed to the worlde through his default, he therefore bewraied the whole circumstaunce to the duke, whereof the duke beyng verie ioyfull, immediatlie repaired with Siluio to the house of Iulina, whom they found in her chamber, in great lamentation & mourning. To whom the duke saide, take courage madam for beholde here a gentilman, that will not sticke, bothe to father your childe and to take you for his wife, no inferiour persone, but the sonne and heire of a noble duke, worthie of your estate and dignitie.

Iulina seyng Siluio in place, did know very well that he was the father of her childe, and was so ravished with ioye, that she knewe not whether she were awake, or in some dreame. Siluio imbracyng her in his armes, crauyng forgiuenesse of all that was past: concluded with her the mariage daie, which was presently accomplished with greate ioye and contentation to all parties: and thus Siluio hauyng attained a noble wife, and Silla his sister her desired houseband, they passed the residue of their daies with suche delight, as those that haue accompliished the perfection of their felicities.

SIR SIMON EYER

THOMAS DELONEY

HOW SIR SIMON EYER BEING AT FIRST A SHOOMAKER, BECAME IN THE END MAIOR OF LONDON, THROUGH THE COUNSELL OF HIS WIFE: AND HOW HE BROKE HIS FAST EVERY DAY ON A TABLE THAT HE SAID HE WOULD NOT SELL FOR A THOUSAND POUNDS: AND HOW HE BUILDED LEADON HALL

Our English chronicles do make mention that sometime there was in the honourable City of London a worthy maior, known by the name of Sir Simon Eyer, whose fame liueth in the mouths of many men to this day, who, albeit he descended from mean parentage, yet, by Gods blessing, in the end he came to be a most worthy man in the commonwealth.

This man, being brought young out of the north countrey, was bound prentise to a shoomaker, bearing then the name of the Gentle Craft (as still it doth) his master being a man of reasonable wealth, set many iourney-men and prentises to work, who followed their businesse with great delight, which quite excludeth all wearinesse; for when seruants do sit at their worke like dromedaries, then their minds are neuer lightly vpon their businesse; for it is an old prouerbe,

> They proue seruants kind and good,
> That sing at their businesse like birds in the wood.

Such fellows had this young lad, who was not behind with many northern iigs to answer their southern songs. This youth being the youngest prentise in the house, as occasion serued, was often sent to the conduit for water, where in short time he fell acquainted with many other prentises coming thither for the same intent.

Now their custome was so, that euery Sunday morning diuers of these prentises did vse to go to a place neer the conduit to break their fast with pudding-pies, and often they would take Simon along with them; but vpon a time it so fell out, that when he should draw money to pay the shot with the rest, that he had none, whereupon he merrily said vnto them: My faithfull friends, and conduit companions, treasurers[1] of the

[1] treasurers, 1675, *etc.*: treasures, 1648.

water tankard, and main pillers of the puddinghouse, I may now compare my purse to a barren doe, that yields the keeper no more good than an empty carkasse: or to a bad nut, which, being opened, hath neuer a kernell: therefore, if it will please you to pardon me at this time, and excuse me for my part of the shot, I do here vow vnto you, that, if euer I come to be Lord Maior of this city, I will giue a breakfast vnto all the printises in London.

We do take your word (quoth they) and so they departed.

It came to passe, that Simon hauing at length worn out his yeers of apprentiship, that he fell in loue with a maiden that was neer neighbour vnto him, vnto whom at length he was married and got him a shop, and labored hard daily, and his young wife was neuer idle, but straight when she had nothing to do, she sat in the shop and spun: and hauing liued thus alone a yeer or thereabout, and hauing gathered something together, at length he got him some printises, and a iourney-man or two, and he could not make his ware so fast as he could haue sold it, so that he stood in great need of a iourney-man or two more.

At the last, one of his seruants spying one go along the street with a fardell at his back, called to his master, saying, sir, yonder goes Saint Hughs bones, twenty pounds to a penney.

Run presently (quoth he) and bring him hither.

The boy running forth, called to the man, saying, Good fellow, come hither, here is one would speak with you.

The fellow, being a Frenchman that had not long been in England, turning about, said, Hea? what you sea? Will you speak wed me: Hea? What you haue? tell me, what you haue, Hea? And with that coming to the stall, the good-man askt him if he lackt work, We par ma foy (quoth the Frenchman).

Hereupon Simon took him in, and to worke he went merrily, where he behaued himselfe so well, that his master made good account of him, thinking he had been a bachelor, but in the end it was found otherwise.

This man was the first that wrought vpon the low cut shooe, with the square toe, and the latchet ouerthwart the instep, before which time in England they did weare a high shooe that reached aboue the ankles, right after the manner of our husbandmens shooes at this day, saue onely that it was made very sharp at the toe turning vp like the tail of an Island dog: or as you see a cock carry his hinder feathers.

Now it is to be remembred, that while Iohn Deneuale dwelt with Simon Eyer, it chanced that a ship of the Ile of Candy was

driuen vpon our coast, laden with all kinds of lawns and cambricks and other linnen cloth: which commodities at that time were in London very scant, and exceeding dear: and by reason of a great leak the ship had got at sea, being vnable to sail any further, he would make what profit he could of his goods here.

And being come to London, it was Iohn Deneuales chance to meet him in the streets, to whom the merchant (in the Greek tongue) demanded where he might haue lodging: for he was one that had neuer been in England before, and being vnacquainted, wist not whither to go: but while he spake Greek, Iohn Deneuale answered him still in French, which tongue the merchant vnderstood well: and therefore, being glad that he had met with one that could talk to him, he declared vnto him what tempests he endured at sea, and also how his ship lay vpon the coast with such commodities as he would sell.

Truly sir (quoth Iohn) I am my selfe but a stranger in this country and vtterly vnacquainted with merchants, but I dwell with one in this city that is a very honest man, and it may be that he can help you to some that will deal with you for it, and if you think it good, I will moue him in it, and in the mean space, Ile bring you where you may haue a very good lodging; to-morrow morning I will come to you again.

Sir (said the merchant) if you please to do me that fauour, Ile not onely be thankfull vnto you for the same, but also in most honest sort will content you for your pains: and with that they departed.

Now as soon as Iohn the Frenchman came home, he moued that matter vnto his master, desiring him that he would do what he could for the merchant. When his master had heard each circumstance, noting therewith the want of such commodities in the land, cast in his mind as he stood cutting vp his work, what were best to be done in this case, saying to his man Iohn, I will think vpon it betwixt this and the morning, and then I will tell you my mind: and therewithall casting down his cutting knife, he went out of his shop into his chamber, and therein walked vp and down alone very sadly, ruminating hereon: he was so far in his muse, that, his wife sending for him to supper two or three times, he nothing regarded the maids call, hammering this matter in his head:

At last his wife came to him, saying, husband, what mean you that you do not come to supper? why speak you not man? Hear you? good husband; come away, your meat will be cold: but for all her words he stayed walking vp and down still, like

a man that had sent his wits a woll-gathering, which his wife seeing, puled him by the sleeue, saying, why, husband in the name of God, why come you not? wil you not come to supper to night? I called you a good while ago.

Body of me, wife (said he) I promise thee I did not hear thee.

No faith, it seemeth so (quoth she) I maruel whereupon your mind runneth.

Beleeue me wife (quoth he) I was studying how to make my selfe Lord Maior and thee a lady.

Now God help you (quoth she) I pray God make vs able to pay euery man his own, that we may liue out of debt and danger, and driue the woolf from the doore, and I desire no more.

But wife (said he) I pray thee now tell me, doest thou not think that thou couldest make shift to bear the name of a lady, if it should be put vpon thee.

In truth husband (quoth she) Ile not dissemble with you, if your wealth were able to beare it, my mind would beare it well enough.

Well wife (replyed he) I tell thee now in sadnesse, that, if I had money, there is a commodity now to be bought, the gains wherof would be able to make me a gentleman foreuer.

Alas husband, that dignitie your trade allows you already, being a squire of the Gentle Craft, then how can you be lesse than a gentleman, seeing your sonne is a prince borne?

Tush, wife (quoth he) those titles do onely rest in name, but not in nature: but of that sort had I rather be, whose lands are answerable to their vertues, and whose rents can maintain the greatnesse of their minde.

Then sweet husband, tell me (said his wife) tell me, what commodity is that which you might get so much by? I am sure your self hath some money, and it shall go very hard but Ile procure friends to borrow one forty shillings, and beside that, rather then you should lose so good a bargain, I haue a couple of crowns that saw no sun since we were first married, and them also shall you haue.

Alasse wife (said Simon) all this comes not neere that matter: I confesse it would do some good in buying some backs of leather, but in this thing it is nothing, for this is merchandise that is precious at this time, and rare to be had; and I hear that whosoeuer will haue it must lay down three thousand pounds ready money. Yea wife, and yet thereby he might get three and three thousand pounds profit.

His wife hearing him say so was inflamed with the desire thereof, as women are (for the most part) very couetous: that matter running still in her mind, she could scant finde in her heart to spare him time to go to supper, for very eagernesse to animate him on, to take that bargain vpon him. Wherefore so soon as they had supt, and giuen God thanks, she called her husband, saying, I pray you come hither, I would speake a word with you: that man is not alwayes to be blamed that sometimes takes counsell of his wife; though womens wits are not able to comprehend the greatest things, yet in doubtful matters they oft help on a sudden.

Well wife, what mean you by this (said her husband)?

In truth (quoth she) I would haue you to pluck vp a mans heart, and speedily chop vp a bargain for these goods you speak of.

Who I? (quoth he), which way should I do it, that am not able for three thousand pounds, to lay down three thousand pence?

Tush man (quoth she) what of that? euery man that beholds a man in the face, knows not what he hath in his purse, and whatsoeuer he be that owes the goods, he will no doubt be content to stay a moneth for his money, or three weeks at the least: And, I promise you, to pay a thousand pounds a week is a pretty round payment, and, I may say to you, not much to be misliked of.

Now husband, I would haue you in the morning with Iohn the Frenchman to the Grecian merchant, and with good discretion driue a sound bargain with him for the whole fraught of the ship, and thereupon giue him halfe a dozen angels in earnest, and eight and twenty dayes after the deliuery of the goods, condition to deliuer him the rest of his money.

But woman (quoth he) dost thou imagine that he would take my word for so weighty a masse of money, and to deliuer his goods vpon no better security?

Good Lord (quoth she) haue you no wit in such a case to make shift? Ile tell you what you shall do: Be not known that you bargain for your own selfe, but tell him that you do it in the behalf of one of the chief aldermen in the city; but beware in any case, that you leaue with him your own name in writing; he being a Grecian cannot read English: and you haue no need at all to shew Iohn the Frenchman, nor if you should, it were no great matter, for you can tell well enough that he can neither write nor read.

I perceiue wife (quoth he) thou wouldest fain be a lady, and worthy thou art to be one, that dost thus imploy thy wits to bring thy husband profit: but tell me, if he should be desirous to see the alderman to confer with him, how shall we do then?

Iesus haue mercy vpon vs (quoth she) you say women are fools, but me seemeth men haue need to be taught sometimes. Before you come away in the morning, let Iohn the Frenchman tell him that the alderman himselfe shall come to his lodging in the afternoon: and, receiuing a note of all the goods that be in the ship, he shall deliuer vnto him a bill of his hand for the payment of his money, according to that time. Now sweetheart (quoth she) this alderman shall be thine own selfe, and Ile go borrow for thee all things that shall be necessary against that time.

Tush (quoth her husband) canst thou imagine that he, seeing me in the morning, will not know me again in the afternoon?

O husband (quoth she) he will not know thee, I warrant thee: for in the morning thou shalt go to him in thy doublet of sheeps skins, with a smuched face, and thy apron before thee, thy thumb-leather and hand-leather buckled close to thy wrist, with a foule band about thy neck, and a greasie cap on thy head.

Why woman (quoth he) to go in this sort will be a discredit to me, and make the merchant doubtfull of my dealing: for men of simple attire are (God wot) slenderly esteemed.

Hold your peace good husband (quoth she) it shall not be so with you, for Iohn the Frenchman shall giue such good report to the merchant for your honest dealing (as I praise God he can do no lesse) that the Grecian will rather conceiue the better of you than otherwise: iudging you a prudent discreet man, that will not make a shew of that you are not, but go in your attire agreeable to your trade. And because none of our folks shall be priuy to our intent, to-morrow weel dine at my cousin Iohn Barbers in Saint Clements Lane, which is not far from the George in Lumbard Street, where the merchant strangers lie. Now Ile be sure that all things shall be ready at my cousin Iohns that you shall put on in the afternoon. And there he shall first of all with his scissers snap off all the superfluous hairs, and fashion thy bushy beard after the aldermans graue cut: then shall he wash thee with a sweet camphire ball, and besprinkle thine head and face with the purest rose-water; then shalt thou scoure thy pitchy fingers in a bason of hot water, with an ordinary washing ball; and all this being done, strip thee from these common weeds, and Ile put thee on a very fair

doublet of tawny sattin, ouer the which thou shalt haue a cassock of branched damask, furred round about the skirts with the finest foynes, thy breeches of black veluet, and shooes and stockings fit for such array: a band about thy neck as white as the driuen snow, and for thy wrists a pretty pair of cuffs, and on thy head a cap of the finest black, then shalt thou put on a fair gown, welted about with veluet, and ouerthwart the back thwart it shall be with rich foyne, with a pair of sweet gloues on thy hands, and on thy forefinger a great seale-ring of gold.

Thou being thus attired, Ile intreat my cousin Iohn Barber, because he is a very handsome young man, neat and fine in his apparell (as indeed all barbers are) that he would take the pains to wait vpon you vnto the merchants, as if he were your man, which he will do at the first, because one of you cannot vnderstand the other, so that it will be sufficient with outward curtesie one to greet another, and he to deliuer vnto you his notes, and you to giue him your bill, and so come home.

It doth my heart good, to see how trimly this apparell doth become you, in good faith, husband, me seems in my mind, I see you in it already, and how like an alderman you will look, when you are in this costly array. At your return from the merchant, you shall put off all these clothes at my cousins again, and come home as you did go forth. Then tell Iohn the Frenchman, that the alderman was with the merchant this afternoon, you may send him to him in the morning, and bid him to command that his ship may be brought down the riuer: while she is coming about, you may giue notice to the linnen drapers, of the commodities you haue coming.

Enough wife (quoth he) thou hast said enough; and, by the grace of God, Ile follow thy counsell, and I doubt not but to haue good fortune.

HOW SIMON EYER WAS SENT FOR TO MY LORD MAIORS TO SUPPER, AND SHEWING THE GREAT ENTERTAINMENT HE AND HIS WIFE HAD THERE

Anon, after supper time drew neer, she, making herselfe ready in the best manner she could deuise, passed along with her husband vnto my Lord Maiors hovse: and being entred into the great hall, one of the officers there certified my Lord Maior, that the great, rich shoomaker and his wife were already come. Whereupon the Lord Maior in courteous manner came into

the hall to Simon, saying, You are most heartily welcome good Master Eyer, and so is your gentle bed-fellow. Then came forth the Lady Maiores and saluted them both in like manner, saying, Welcome, good Master Eyer and Mistresse Eyer both: and taking her by the hand, set her down among the gentlewomen there present.

Sir (quoth the Lord Maior) I vnderstand you are a shoomaker, and that it is you that hath bought up[1] all the goods of the great Argozy.

I am indeed, my lord of the Gentle craft (quoth he) and I praise God, all the goods of the great Argozy are mine own, when my debts are paid.

God giue you much ioy of them (said the Lord Maior) and I trust you and I shall deal for some part thereof.

So the meat being then ready to be brought in, the guests were placed each one according to their calling. My Lord Maior holding Simon by the hand, and the Lady Maiores holding his wife, they would needs haue them sit neer to themselues, which they then with blushing cheeks refusing, my lord said vnto them, holding his cap in his hand.

Master Eyer and Mistresse Eyer, let me intreat you not to be troublesome, for I tell you it shall be thus: and as for those gentlemen here present, they are all of mine old acquaintance, and many times we haue been together, therefore I dare be the bolder with them: albeit you are our neighbours also, yet I promise you, you are strangers to my table, and to strangers common courtesie doth teach vs to shew the greatest fauour, and therefore let me rule you in mine house, and you shall rule me in yours.

When Simon found there was no remedy, they sat them down, but the poore woman was so abashed, that she did eat but little meat at the table, bearing her selfe at the table with a comely and modest countenance: but what she wanted in outward feeding, her heart yeelded to, with inward delight and content.

Now, so it was, many men that knew not Simon, and seeing him in so simple attire sit next my lord, whisperingly asked one another what he was. And it was enough for Simons wife, with her eyes and ears, to see and hearken after euerything that was said or done.

A graue, wealthy cittizen, sitting at the table, spake to Simon, and said, sir, in good will I drink to your good health, but I beseech you pardon me, for I know not how to call your name.

[1] bought up, 1675, etc.: brought up, 1648.

With that my Lord Maior answeared him, saying, his name is Master Eyer, and this is the gentleman that bought all the goods that came in the *Black Swan* of Candy, and, before God, though he sit here in simple sort, for his wealth I do verily beleeue he is more sufficient to bear this place than my selfe. This was a man that was neuer thought vpon, liuing obscure amongst vs, of none account in the eyes of the world, carrying the countenance but of a shoomaker, and none of the best sort neither, and is able to deal for a bargain of fiue thousand pounds at a clap.

We do want many such shoomakers (said the citizen) and so with other discourse droue out supper.

At what time, rising from the table, Simon and his wife, receiuing sundrie salutations of my Lord Maior and his lady, and of all the rest of the worshipfull guests, departed home to their own house: at what time his wife made such a recitall of the matters; how brauely they were entertained, what great chear was there, also what a great company of gentlemen and gentlewomen were there, and how often they drank to her husband and to her, with diuers other circumstances, that I beleeue, if the night had been six moneths long, as it is vnder the north pole, they would haue found talke enough till morning.

Of a truth (quoth she) although I sate closely by my ladies side, I could eat nothing for very joy, to heare and see that we were so much made of. And neuer giue me credit husband, if I did not hear the officers whisper as they stood behind me, and all demanded one of another, what you were, and what I was: O (quoth one) do you see this man? mark him well, and marke his wife well, that simple woman that sits next my ladie what are they? What are they (quoth another)? Marry this is the rich shoomaker that bought all the goods in the great Argozy: I tell you there was neuer such a shoomaker seen in London since the city was builded. Now by my faith (quoth the third) I haue heard much of him to-day among the merchants in the street, going between the two chains: Credit me husband, of mine honesty this was their communication. Nay, and do you not remember, when the rich citizen drank to you (which craued pardon because he knew not your name) what my Lord Maior said? Sir (quoth he) his name is Master Eyer, did you mark that? and presently thereupon he added these words: this is the gentleman that bought, and so forth. The gentleman vnderstood you, did you heare him speake that word?

In troth wife (quoth he) my lord vttered many good words of me, I thank his honour, but I heard not that.

No (quoth she). I heard it well enough: for by and by he proceeded further, saying, I suppose though he sit here in simple sort, he is more sufficient to beare this charge than my selfe. Yea (thought I) he may thank his wife for that, if it come so to passe.

Nay (said Simon) I thank God for it.

Yea, and next him you may thank me (quoth she[1]). And it did her so much good to talk of it, that I suppose, if she had liued till this day, she would yet be prating thereof, and if sleep did not driue her from it.

And now seeing that Simon the shoomaker is become a merchant, we will temper our tongues to giue him that title, which his customers were wont to do, and from henceforth call him master Eyer, who, while he had his affairs in hand, committed the gouernment of his shop to Iohn the Frenchman, leauing him to be guide to his other seruants, by meanes of which fauour Iohn thought himselfe at that time to be a man of no small reputation.

HOW MASTER EYER WAS CALLED VPON TO BE SHERIFFE OF LONDON, AND HOW HE HELD HIS PLACE WITH WORSHIP

In this space Master Eyer following his businesse, had sold so much of his merchandize as paid the Grecian his whole money: and yet had resting to himselfe three times as much as he had sold, whereof he trusted some to one alderman, and some to another, and a great deal amongst substantiall merchants; and for some had much ready money, which he imployed in diuers merchandizes: and became aduenturer at Sea, hauing (by Gods blessing) many a prosperous voiage, whereby his riches dailie increased.

It chanced vpon a time, that being in his study, casting vp his accounts, he found himselfe to be clearely worth twelue or thirteen thousand pounds, which he finding to be so, he called his wife to him, and said:

The last day I did cast vp my accounts, and I finde that Almighty God of his goodnesse hath lent me thirteen thousand pounds to maintain vs in our old age, for which his gracious goodnesse towards vs, let vs with our whole hearts giue his

[1] quoth she, 1675, etc: quoth he, 1648.

glorious Maiesty eternall praise, and therewithall pray vnto him, that we may so dispose thereof, as may be to his honour, and the comfort of his poore members on earth, and aboue our neighbours may not be puffed vp with pride, that, while we think on our wealth, we forget God that sent it to vs, for it hath been an old saying of a wise man, that abundance groweth from riches, and disdain out of abundance: of which God giue vs grace to take heed, and grant vs a contented mind.

So soon as he had spoken this, they heard one knocking hastily at doore, whereupon he sent Florence to see who it was, the maiden, coming again, told her master it was one of my Lord Maiors officers that would speake with him. The officer being permitted to come in, after due reuerence, he said, Sir, it hath pleased my Lord Maior with the worshipfull aldermen his brethren, with the counsell of the whole communaltie of the honourable city, to chuse your worship Sheriffe of London this day, and haue sent me to desire you to come and certifie your minde therein, whether you be contented to hold the place or no.

Master Eyer hearing this, answered he would come to his honor and their worships incontinent, and resolue them what he was minded to do; and so the officer departed.

His wife, which all this while listned to their talk, hearing how the case stood, with a ioyfull countenance meeting her husband, taking him about the neck with a louing kisse, said, Master Sheriffe, God giue thee ioy of thy name and place!

O wife (quoth he) my person is far vnworthy of that place, and the name far exceeds my degree.

What, content your selfe, good husband (quoth she) and disable not your selfe in such sort, but be thankfull vnto God for that you haue, and do not spurn at such promotion as God sendeth vnto you: the Lord be praised for it, you haue enough to discharge the place whereunto you are called with credit: and wherefore sendeth God goods, but therewithall to do him and your countrey seruice?

Woman (quoth he) Soft fire makes sweet mault: For such as take things in hand rashly, repent as suddenly: to be Sheriffe of London is no little cost. Consider first (quoth he) what house I ought to haue, and what costly ornaments belong thereunto, as: hanging of tapistry cloth of Arras, and other such like, what store of plate and goblets of gold, what costly attire, and what a chargeable train, and that which is most of all, how greatly I stand charged beside, to our Soueraigne

Lord, the King, for the answering of such prisoners as shall be committed to my custody, with an hundred matters of such importance, which are to such an office belonging.

Good Lord husband (quoth she) what need all these repetitions? You need not tell me it is a matter of great charge: notwithstanding, I verily think many heretofore haue with great credit discharged the place, whose wealth hath not in any sort been answerable to your riches, and whose wits haue been as mean as your own: truly sir shall I be plain? I know not anything that is to be spoken of, that you want to performe it, but only your good will: and to lack good will to do your king and countrey good were a signe of an vnworthy subiect, which I hope you will neuer be.

Well wife (said her husband) thou dost hold me here with prittle prattle, while the time passeth on, tis high time I were gone to Guild-Hall, I doubt I shall appear too vnmannerly in causing my Lord Maior and the rest to stay my leisure.

And he hauing made himselfe ready, meet to go before such an assembly as he went vnto, he went out of doores, at what time his wife called after him, saying: and holding vp her finger, Husband, remember, you know what I haue said: take heed you dissemble not with God and the world, look to it husband.

Go too, go too, get you in (quoth he) about your businesse, and so away he went.

So soon as he was gone out of sight, his wife sent one of his men after him to Guild-Hall, to hearken and hear, whether her husband held his place or no: and if he do, bring me word with all possible speed.

I will, mistresse (quoth her man).

Now, when Master Eyer came to Guild-Hall, the Lord Maior and his brethren bade him heartily welcome, saying Sir, the communaltie of the city, hauing a good opinion of you, haue chosen you for one of our Sheriffes for this yeer, not doubting but to find you a fit man for the place.

My good Lord (quoth he) I humbly thank the city for their courtesie and kindnesse, and would to God my wealth were answereable to my good will, and my ability were able to bear it. But I find my selfe insufficient; I most humbly desire a yeers respite more, and pardon for this present.

At these words, a graue commoner of the city standing vp, with due reuerence spoke thus vnto the Maior: my good Lord, this is but a slender excuse for Master Eyer to make; for I

haue often heard him say, and so haue diuers others also, that he hath a table in his house whereon he breaks his fast euery day, that he will not giue for a thousand pounds: Wherefore (vnder your Lordships correction) in my simple iudgement, I think he that is able to spare a thousand pounds in such a dead commodity is very sufficient to be Sheriff of London.

See you now (quoth my Lord) I muse, Master Eyer, that you will haue so lame an excuse before vs, as to take exceptions at your own wealth, which is apparantly proued sufficient: you must know, Master Eyer, that the commons of London haue searching eyes, and seldome are they deceiued in their opinion, and, therefore looke what is done, you must stand to it.

I beseech you, my Lord (quoth Master Eyer) giue me leaue to speak one word. Let it be granted, that I will not giue my table whereon I breake my fast for a thousand pounds, that is no consequence to proue it is worth so much, my fancy to the thing is all: for doubtlesse no man here would giue me a thousand shillings for it when they see it.

All is one, for that (quoth my Lord Maior) yet dare I giue you as much wine as you will spend this yeer in your shriualtie to let me haue it.

My good Lord (quoth he) on that condition I will hold my place, and rest no longer troublesome to this company.

You must hold (said my Lord) without any condition or exceptions at all in this matter; and so they ended.

The assembly being then broken vp, the voice went Master Eyer is Sheriffe, Master Eyer is Sheriffe. Whereupon the fellow that Mistresse Eyer sent to obserue how things framed, ran home in all haste, and with leaping and reioycing said: Mistresse, God giue you ioy, for you are now a gentlewoman.

What (quoth she) tell me sir sawce, is thy master Sheriffe, or no? and doth he hold his place?

Yes mistresse, he holds it now as fast as the stirrop doth the shooes while we sow it.

Why then (quoth she) I haue my hearts desire, and that I so long looked for, and so away she went.

Within a while after came her husband, and with him one of the aldermen, and a couple of wealthy commoners, one of them was he that gaue such great commendations of his table, and comming to his doore, he said, You are welcome home good master Sheriffe.

Nay, I pray you, come in and drink with me before you go. Then said he, Wife bring me forth the pasty of venison, and set

me here my little table, that these gentlemen may eat a bit with me before they go.

His wife which had been oft vsed to this terme, excused the matter, saying; The little table! Good Lord husband, I do wonder what you will do with the little table now, knowing that it is vsed already? I pray you good husband, content your selfe, and sit at this great table this once. Then she whispered him in the eare, saying; What man, shall we shame ourselues?

What shame? (quoth he) tell not me of shame, but do thou as thou art bidden; for we are three or foure of vs, then what do we troubling the great table?

Truly (answered she) the little table is not ready now good husband, let it alone.

Trust me we are troublesome guests (said the alderman), but yet we would fain see your little table, because it is said to be of such prize.

Yea, and it is my mind you shall (quoth Master Eyer), therefore he called his wife again, saying, good wife, dispatch and prepare the little table: for these gentlemen would fain haue a view of it.

Whereupon his wife, seeing him so earnest, according to her wonted manner, came in: and setting her selfe down on a low stool, laid a fair napkin ouer her knees, and set the platter with the pasty of venison thereupon, and presently a chear was brought for master alderman, and a couple of stools for the two commoners, which they beholding, with a sudden and hearty laughter, said: Why Master Sheriffe, is this the table you held so deare?

Yes truly (quoth he).

Now verily (quoth they), you herein haue vtterly deceiued our expectation.

Euen so did you mine (quoth he) in making me Sheriffe: but you are all right welcome, and I will tell you true, had I not thought wondrous well of you, you had not seen my table now. And I think, did my Lord Maior see it as you do, he would repent his bargain so hastily made. Notwithstanding I account of my table neuer the worse.

Nor haue you any cause (quoth they) and so after much pleasant talk, they departed, spreading the fame of Master Sheriffes little table over the whole city.

But you must now imagine, that a thousand cares combred the Sheriffe, in prouiding all things necessary for his office:

at what time he put off his shoomakers shop to one of his men, and set vp at the same time the signe of the black swan swiming vpon the sea, in remembrance of that ship, that first did bring him his wealth, and before that time, the sign of the black swan was neuer seen or known in any place in or about the city of London.

HOW MASTER ALDERMAN EYER WAS CHOSEN LORD MAIOR OF LONDON, AND HOW HE FEASTED ALL THE PRENTISES ON SHROUE TUESDAY

WITHIN a few yeers after, Alderman Eyer being chosen Lord Maior of London, changing his company, he became one of the worshipfull Company of Drapers, and for this yeer he kept a most bountifull house. At this time it came into his mind what a promise once he made to the prentises, being at breakfast with them at their going to the conduit, speaking to his lady in this wise: Good Lord (quoth he) what a change haue we had within these thirty yeers? And how greatly hath the Lord blessed vs since that? blessed be his Name for it.

I do remember, when I was a young prentise what a match I made vpon a Shroue Tuesday morning, being at the conduit, among other of my companions; trust me wife (quoth he) tis worth the hearing, and Ile tell thee how it fell out.

After we had filled our tankards with water, there was some would needs haue me set down my tankard, and go with them to breakfast (as many times before I had done) to which I consented: and it was a breakfast of pudding-pies. I shall neuer forget it. But to make short, when the shot came to be paid, each one drew out his money but I had not one peny in my purse, and credit I had none in the place; which when I beheld being abashed, I said; Well my masters, do you giue me my breakfast this time; and in requitall thereof, if euer I be Maior of London, Ile bestow a breakfast one all the prentises of the city: these were the words, little thinking, (God wot) that euer it should come to passe: but such was the great goodnesse of our God, who setteth vp the humble, and pulleth down the proud, to bring whom he pleaseth to the seat of honour. For as the scripture witnesseth, promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, but from him that is the giuer of all good things, the mighty Lord of heauen and earth. Wherefore wife, seeing God hath bestowed that vpon me that I neuer

looked for; it is reason that I should perform my promise: and being able now, Ile pay that which then I was not able to do: for I would not haue men say that I am like the Ebon-tree, that neither beares leafes nor fruit. Wherefore wife, seeing that Shroue Tuesday is so neer at hand, I will vpon that day fulfill my promise, which vpon that day I made.

Truly (my lord) (quoth she) I will be right willing thereunto.

Then answered my lord, as thou dost loue me, let them want neither pudding-pies nor pancakes, and look what other good chear is to be had, I will referre all to your discretion.

Hereupon great prouision was made for the prentises breakfast: and Shroue Tuesday being come, the Lord Maior send word to the aldermen, that in their seuerall wards they should signifie his mind to the citizens, to craue their fauours that their prentises might come to his house to breakfast, and that for his sake they might play all the day after. Hereupon it was ordered that at the ringing of a bell in euery parish, the prentises should leaue work and shut vp their shops for that day, which being euer since yeerly obserued, it is called the Pancake Bell.

The prentises being all assembled, my Lord Maiors house was not able to hold them, they were such a multitude, so that besides the great hall, all the gardens were set with tables, and in the backside tables were set, and euery other spare place was also furnish'd: so that at length they were al placed and while meat was bringing in, to delight their eares, as well as to feed their bodies, and to drown the noise of their pratlings, drums and trumpets were pleasantly sounded: that being ended, the waits of the city, with diuers other sorts of musick played also to beguile the time, and to put off all discontent.

After the first seruice, were all the tables plentifully furnished with pudding-pies and pancakes, in very plentifull manner; and the rest that remained was giuen to the poore. Wine and ale in very great measure they had giuen, insomuch that they had no lack, nor excesse to cause them to be disordered. And in the midst of this their merriment the Lord Maior, in his scarlet gown, and his lady in like manner went in amongst them; bidding them all most heartily welcome, saying vnto them, that his promise so long ago made, he hath at length performed. At what time they (in token of thankfulnesse) flung vp their caps, giuing a great shout, and incontinently they all quietly departed.

Then after this, Sir Simon Eyer builded Leaden Hall,

appointing that in the midst thereof, there should be a market place kept euery Munday for leather, where the shoomakers of London, for their more ease, might buy of the tanners without seeking any further.

And in the end, this worthy man ended his life in London with great honour.

IN DEFENCE OF HIS RIGHT

DANIEL DEFOE

A GENTLEMAN of a very good estate married a lady of also a good fortune, and had one son by her, and one daughter, and no more, and after a few years his lady died. He soon married a second venter; and his second wife, though of an inferior quality and fortune to the former, took upon her to discourage and discountenance his children by his first lady, and made the family very uncomfortable, both to the children and to their father also.

The first thing of consequence which this conduct of the mother-in-law produced in the family, was that the son, who began to be a man, asked the father's leave to go abroad to travel. The mother-in-law, though willing enough to be rid of the young man, yet because it would require something considerable to support his expenses abroad, violently opposed it, and brought his father also to refuse him after he had freely given him his consent.

This so affected the young gentleman, that after using all the dutiful applications to his father that he could possibly do, as well by himself as by some other relations, but to no purpose; and being a little encouraged by an uncle, who was brother to his mother, his father's first lady, he resolved to go abroad without leave, and accordingly did so.

What part of the world he travelled into I do not remember; it seems his father had constantly intelligence from him for some time, and was prevailed with to make him a reasonable allowance for his subsistence, which the young gentleman always drew bills for, and they were honourably paid; but after some time, the mother-in-law prevailing at home, one of his bills of exchange was refused, and being protested, was sent

back without acceptance; upon which he drew no more, nor did he write any more letters, or his father hear anything from him for upwards of four years, or thereabout.

Upon this long silence, the mother-in-law made her advantage several ways; she first intimated to his father that he must needs be dead; and consequently, his estate should be settled upon her eldest son (for she had several children). His father withstood the motion very firmly, but the wife harassed him with her importunities; and she argued upon two points against him, I mean the son.

First, if he was dead, then there was no room to object, her son being heir at law.

Secondly, if he was not dead, his behaviour to his father in not writing for so long a time was inexcusable, and he ought to resent it, and settle the estate as if he were dead; that nothing could be more disobliging, and his father ought to depend upon it that he was dead, and treat him as if he was so; for he that would use a father so, should be taken for one dead, as to his filial relation, and be treated accordingly.

His father, however, stood out a long time, and told her that he could not answer it to his conscience; that there might happen many things in the world, which might render his son unable to write; that he might be taken by the Turks, and carried into slavery; or he might be among the Persians or Arabians (which it seems was the case), and so could not get any letters conveyed; and that he could not be satisfied to disinherit him, till he knew whether he had reason for it or no, or whether his son had offended him or no.

These answers, however just, were far from stopping her importunities, which she carried on so far, that she gave him no rest, and it made an unquiet family; she carried it very ill to him, and in a word, made her children do so too; and the gentleman was so wearied out with it, that once or twice he came to a kind of consent to do it, but his heart failed him, and then he fell back again, and refused.

However, her having brought him so near it, was an encouragement to her to go on with her restless solicitations, till at last he came thus far to a provisional agreement, that if he did not hear from his son by such a time, or before it, he would consent to a re-settling the estate.

She was not well satisfied with the conditional agreement, but being able to obtain no other, she was obliged to accept of it as it was; though, as she often told him, she was far

from being satisfied with it as to the time, for he had fixed it for four years, as above.

He grew angry at her telling him so, and answered, that she ought to be very well satisfied with it, for that it was time little enough, as his son's circumstances might be.

Well, she teased him however so continually, that at last she brought him down to one year: but before she brought him to that, she told him one day in a heat, that she hoped his ghost would one time or other appear to him, and tell him that he was dead, and that he ought to do justice to his other children, for he should never come to claim the estate.

When he came, so much against his will, to consent to shorten the time to one year, he told her that he hoped his son's ghost, though he was not dead, would come to her, and tell her he was alive, before the time expired. "For why," says he, "may not injured souls walk while embodied, as well as afterwards?"

It happened one evening after this, that they had a most violent family quarrel upon this subject, when on a sudden a hand appeared at a casement, endeavouring to open it; but as all the iron casements used in former times opened outward, but hasped and fastened themselves in the inside, so the hand seemed to try to open the casement, but could not. The gentleman did not see it, but his wife did, and she presently started up, as if she was frighted, and, forgetting the quarrel they had upon their hands: "Lord bless me!" says she, "there are thieves in the garden." Her husband ran immediately to the door of the room they sat in, and opening it, looked out.

"There's nobody in the garden," says he; so he clapped the door to again, and came back.

"I am sure," says she, "I saw a man there."

"It must be the devil then," says he; "for I'm sure there's nobody in the garden."

"I'll swear," says she, "I saw a man put his hand up to open the casement; but finding it fast, and I suppose," adds she, "seeing us in the room, he walked off."

"It is impossible he could be gone," says he; "did not I run to the door immediately? and you know the garden walls on both sides hinder him going."

"Pry'thee," says she angrily, "I an't drunk nor in a dream, I know a man when I see him, and 'tis not dark, the sun is not quite down."

"You're only frighted with shadows," says he (very full of

ill-nature): " folks generally are so that are haunted with an evil conscience: it may be 'twas the devil."

" No, no, I'm not soon frighted," says she; " if 'twas the devil, 'twas the ghost of your son: it may be come to tell you he was gone to the devil, and you might give your estate to your eldest bastard, since you won't settle it on the lawful heir."

" If it was my son," says he, " he's come to tell us he's alive, I warrant you, and to ask how you can be so much a devil to desire me to disinherit him;" and with these words: " Alexander," says he aloud, repeating it twice, starting up out of his chair, " if you are alive, show yourself, and don't let me be insulted thus every day with your being dead."

At those very words, the casement which the hand had been seen at by the mother, opened of itself, and his son Alexander looked in with a full face, and staring directly upon the mother with an angry countenance, cried " Here," and then vanished in a moment.

The woman that was so stout before, shrieked out in a most dismal manner, so as alarmed the whole house; her maid ran into the parlour, to see what was the matter, but her mistress was fainted away in her chair.

She was not fallen upon the ground, because it being a great easy chair, she sunk a little back against the side of the chair, and help coming immediately in, they kept her up; but it was not till a great while after, that she recovered enough to be sensible of anything.

Her husband ran immediately to the parlour door, and opening it, went into the garden, but there was nothing; and after that he ran to another door that opened from the house into the garden, and then to two other doors which opened out of his garden, one into the stable-yard, and another into the field beyond the garden, but found them all fast shut and barred; but on one side was his gardener, and a boy, drawing the rolling-stone: he asked them if anybody else had been in the garden, but they both constantly affirmed nobody had been there; and they were both rolling a gravel-walk near the house.

Upon this he comes back into the room, sits him down again, and said not one word for a good while; the women and servants being busy all the while, and in a hurry, endeavouring to recover his wife.

After some time she recovered so far as to speak, and the first words she said, were:

"L—d bless me! what was it?"

"Nay," says her husband, "it was Alexander, to be sure."

With that she fell into a fit, and screamed and shrieked out again most terribly.

Her husband not thinking that would have affected her, did what he could to persuade her out of it again; but that would not do, and they were obliged to carry her to bed, and get some help to her; but she continued very ill for several days after.

However, this put an end for some considerable time to her solicitations about his disinheriting her son-in-law.

But time, that hardens the mind in cases of a worse nature, wore this off also by degrees, and she began to revive the old cause again, though not at first so eagerly as before.

Nay, he used her a little hardly upon it too, and if ever they had any words about it he would bid her hold her tongue, or that if she talked any more upon that subject, he would call Alexander again to open the casement.

This aggravated things much; and though it terrified her a great while, yet at length she was so exasperated, that she told him she believed he dealt with the devil, and that he had sold himself to the devil only to be able to fright his wife.

He jested with her, and told her any man would be beholden to the devil to hush a noisy woman, and that he was very glad he had found the way to do it, whatever it cost him.

She was so exasperated at this, that she threatened him if he played any more of his hellish arts with her she would have him indicted for a wizard, and having a familiar; and she could prove it, she said, plain enough, for that he had raised the devil on purpose to fright his wife.

The fray parted that night with ill words and ill nature enough, but he little thought she intended as she said, and the next day he had forgot it all, and was as good-humoured as if nothing had happened.

But he found his wife chagrined and disturbed very much, full of resentment, and threatening him with what she resolved to do.

However, he little thought she intended him the mischief she had in her head, offering to talk friendly to her; but she rejected it with scorn, and told him she would be as good as her word, for she would not live with a man that should bring the devil into the room as often as he thought fit, to murder his wife.

He strove to pacify her by fair words, but she told him she was in earnest with him: and, in a word, she was in earnest; for she goes away to a justice, and making an affidavit that her husband had a familiar spirit, and that she went in danger of her life, she obtained a warrant for him to be apprehended.

In short, she brought home the warrant, showed it him, and told him she had not given it into the hands of an officer, because he should have the liberty to go voluntarily before the justice of the peace, and if he thought fit to let her know when he would be ready, she would be so too, and would get some of her own friends to go along with her.

He was surprised at this, for he little thought she had been in earnest with him, and endeavoured to pacify her by all the ways possible; but she found she had frighted him heartily, and so indeed she had, for though the thing had nothing in it of guilt, yet he found it might expose him very much, and being loath to have such a thing brought upon the stage against him, he used all the entreaties with her that he was able, and begged her not to do it.

But the more he humbled himself the more she triumphed over him; and carrying things to an unsufferable height of insolence, she told him at last, she would make him do justice, as she called it; that she was sure she could have him punished if he continued obstinate, and she would not be exposed to witchcraft and sorcery; for she did not know to what length he might carry it.

To bring the story to a conclusion; she got the better of him to such a degree, that he offered to refer the thing to indifferent persons, friends on both sides; and they met several times, but could bring it to no conclusion. His friends said there was nothing in it, and they would not have him comply with anything upon the pretence of it; that he called for his son, and somebody opened the casement and cried, "Here"; that there was not the least evidence of witchcraft in that, and insisted that she could make nothing of it.

Her friends carried it high, instructed by her: she offered to swear that he had threatened her before with his son's ghost; that now he visibly raised a spectre; for that calling upon his son, who was dead to be sure, the ghost immediately appeared; that he could not have called up the devil thus to personate his son, if he had not dealt with the devil himself, and had a familiar spirit, and that this was of dangerous consequence to her.

Upon the whole, the man wanted courage to stand it, and was afraid of being exposed; so that he was grievously perplexed, and knew not what to do.

When she found him humbled as much as she could desire, she told him, if he would do her justice, as she called it (that is to say, settle his estate upon her son), she would put it up, on condition that he should promise to fright her no more with raising the devil.

That part of the proposal exasperated him again, and he upbraided her with the slander of it, and told her he defied her, and she might do her worst.

Thus it broke off all treaty, and she began to threaten him again; however, at length she brought him to comply, and he gives a writing under his hand to her, some of her friends being by, promising that he would comply if his son did not arrive, or send an account of himself, within four months.

She was satisfied with this, and they were all made friends again, and accordingly he gave the writing; but when he delivered it to her in presence of her two arbitrators, he took the liberty to say to her, with a grave and solemn kind of speech:

"Look you," says he, "you have worried me into this agreement by your fiery temper, and I have signed it against justice, conscience, and reason; but depend upon it, I shall never perform it."

One of the arbitrators said, "Why, sir, this is doing nothing; for if you resolve not to perform it, what signifies the writing? why do you promise what you do not intend shall be done? This will but kindle a new flame to begin with, when the time fixed expires."

"Why," says he, "I am satisfied in my mind that my son is alive."

"Come, come," says his wife, speaking to the gentleman that had argued with her husband, "let him sign the agreement, and let me alone to make him perform the conditions."

"Well," says her husband, "you shall have the writing, and you shall be let alone; but I am satisfied you will never ask me to perform it; and yet I am no wizard," adds he, "as you have wickedly suggested."

She replied, that she would prove that he dealt with the devil, for that he raised an evil spirit by only calling his son by his name; and so began to tell the story of the hand and the casement.

" Come," says the man to the gentleman that was her friend, " give me the pen; I never dealt with but one devil in my life, and there it sits," turning to his wife; " and now I have made an agreement with her that none but the devil would desire any man to sign, and I will sign it; I say, give me the pen, but she nor all the devils in hell will ever be able to get it executed; remember I say so."

She began to open at him, and so a new flame would have been kindled, but the gentlemen moderated between them, and her husband setting his hand to the writing put an end to the fray at that time.

At the end of four months she challenged the performance, and a day was appointed, and her two friends that had been the arbitrators were invited to dinner upon this occasion, believing that her husband would have executed the deeds; and accordingly the writings were brought all forth, engrossed, and read over; and some old writings, which at her marriage were signed by her trustees, in order to her quitting some part of the estate to her son, were also brought to be cancelled: the husband being brought over, by fair means or foul, I know not whether, to be in a humour, for peace' sake, to execute the deeds, and disinherit his son; alleging that, indeed, if he was dead it was no wrong to him, and if he was alive, he was very unkind and undutiful to his father, in not letting him hear from him in all that time.

Besides, it was urged that if he should at any time afterwards appear to be alive, his father (who had very much increased, it seems, in his wealth) was able to give him another fortune, and to make him a just satisfaction for the loss he should sustain by the paternal estate.

Upon these considerations, I say, they had brought over the poor low-spirited husband to be almost willing to comply; or, at least, willing or unwilling, it was to be done, and, as above, they met accordingly.

When they had discoursed upon all the particulars, and, as above, the new deeds were read over, she or her husband took the old writings up to cancel them; I think the story says it was the wife, not her husband, that was just going to tear off the seal, when on a sudden they heard a rushing noise in the parlour where they sat, as if somebody had come in at the door of the room which opened from the hall, and went through the room towards the garden door, which was shut.

They were all surprised at it, for it was very distinct, but

they saw nothing. The woman turned pale, and was in a terrible fright; however, as nothing was seen, she recovered a little, but began to ruffle her husband again.

"What," says she, "have you laid your plot to bring up more devils again?"

The man sat composed, though he was under no little surprise too.

One of her gentlemen said to him, "What is the meaning of all this?"

"I protest, sir," says he, "I know no more of it than you do."

"What can it be then?" said the other gentleman.

"I cannot conceive," says he, "for I am utterly unacquainted with such things."

"Have you heard nothing from your son?" says the gentleman.

"Not one word," says the father; "no, not the least word these five years."

"Have you wrote nothing to him," says the gentleman, "about this transaction?"

"Not a word," says he; "for I know not where to direct a letter to him."

"Sir," says the gentleman, "I have heard much of apparitions, but I never saw any in my life, nor did I ever believe there was anything of reality in them; and, indeed, I saw nothing now; but the passing of some body, or spirit, or something, across the room just now, is plain; I heard it distinctly. I believe there is some unseen thing in the room, as much as if I saw it."

"Nay," says the other arbitrator, "I felt the wind of it as it passed by me. Pray," adds he, turning to the husband, "do you see nothing yourself?"

"No, upon my word," says he, "not the least appearance in the world."

"I have been told," says the first arbitrator, "and have read, than an apparition may be seen by some people and be invisible to others, though all in the same room together."

However, the husband solemnly protested to them all that he saw nothing.

"Pray, sir," says the first arbitrator, "have you seen anything at any other time, or heard any voices or noises, or had any dreams about this matter?"

"Indeed," says he, "I have several times dreamed my son

is alive, and that I had spoken with him; and once that I asked him why he was so undutiful, and slighted me so, as not to let me hear of him in so many years, seeing he knew it was in my power to disinherit him."

"Well, sir, and what answer did he give?"

"I never dreamed so far on as to have him answer; it always waked me."

"And what do you think of it yourself," says the arbitrator; "do you think he's dead?"

"No, indeed," says the father, "I do believe in my conscience he's alive, as much as I believe I am alive myself; and I am going to do as wicked a thing of its kind as ever any man did."

"Truly," says the second arbitrator, "it begins to shock me, I don't know what to say to it; I don't care to meddle any more with it, I don't like driving men to act against their consciences."

With this the wife, who, as I said, having a little recovered her spirits, and especially encouraged because she saw nothing, started up: "What's all this discourse to the purpose," says she; "is it not all agreed already? what do we come here for?"

"Nay," says the first arbitrator, "I think we meet now not to inquire into why it is done, but to execute things according to agreement, and what are we frighted at?"

"I'm not frighted," says the wife, "not I; come," says she to her husband, haughtily, "sign the deed; I'll cancel the old writings if forty devils were in the room;" and with that she takes up one of the deeds, and went to tear off the seal.

That moment the same casement flew open again, though it was fast in the inside, just as it was before; and the shadow of a body was seen, as standing in the garden without, and the head reaching up to the casement, the face looking into the room, and staring directly at the woman with a stern and an angry countenance: "Hold," said the spectre, as if speaking to the woman, and immediately clapped the casement to again, and vanished.

It is impossible to describe here the consternation this second apparition put the whole company into; the wife, who was so bold just before, that she would do it though forty devils were in the room, screamed out like a woman in fits, and let the writing fall out of her hands: the two arbitrators were exceedingly terrified, but not so much as the rest; but one of them took up the award which they had signed, in which they

awarded the husband to execute the deed to dispose of the estate from the son.

"I dare say," said he, "be the spirit a good spirit or a bad, it will not be against cancelling this; so he tore his name out of the award, and so did the other, by his example, and both of them got up from their seats, and said they would have no more to do in it.

But that which was most unexpected of all was that the man himself was so frighted, that he fainted away; notwithstanding it was, as it might be said, in his favour.

This put an end to the whole affair at that time; and, as I understand by the sequel, it did so for ever.

The story has many particulars more in it, too long to trouble you with: but two particulars, which are to the purpose, I must not omit, viz.:

1. That in about four or five months more after this second apparition, the man's son arrived from the East Indies, whither he had gone four years before in a Portuguese ship from Lisbon.

2. That upon being particularly inquired of about these things, and especially whether he had any knowledge of them, or any apparition to him, or voices, or other intimation as to what was doing in England, relating to him; he affirmed constantly that he had not, except that once he dreamed his father had written him an angry letter, threatening him that if he did not come home he would disinherit him, and leave him not one shilling. But he added, that he never did receive any such letter from his father in his life, or from any one else.

A STORY OF AN HEIR

THE "SPECTATOR"

Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
Rectique cultus pectora roborant:
Utcunque defecere mores,
Dedecorant bene nata culpæ.—Hor.

As I was yesterday taking the air with my friend Sir Roger, we were met by a fresh-coloured ruddy young man who rid by us full speed, with a couple of servants behind him. Upon my inquiry who he was, Sir Roger told me that he was a young gentleman of a considerable estate, who had been educated

by a tender mother that lived not many miles from the place where we were. She is a very good lady, says my friend, but took so much care of her son's health that she has made him good for nothing. She quickly found that reading was bad for his eyes, and that writing made his head ake. He was let loose among the woods as soon as he was able to ride on horseback, or to carry a gun upon his shoulder. To be brief, I found, by my friend's account of him, that he had got a great stock of health, but nothing else; and that if it were a man's business only to live, there would not be a more accomplished young fellow in the whole country.

The truth of it is, since my residing in these parts I have seen and heard innumerable instances of young heirs and elder brothers who either from their own reflecting upon the estates they are born to, and therefore thinking all other accomplishments unnecessary, or from hearing these notions frequently inculcated to them by the flattery of their servants and domesticks, or from the same foolish thought prevailing in those who have the care of their education, are of no manner of use but to keep up their families, and transmit their lands and houses in a line to posterity.

This makes me often think on a story I have heard of two friends, which I shall give my reader at large, under feigned names. The moral of it may, I hope, be useful, though there are some circumstances which make it rather appear like a novel, than a true story.

Eudoxus and Leontine began the world with small estates. They were both of them men of good sense and great virtue. They prosecuted their studies together in their earlier years, and entered into such a friendship as lasted to the end of their lives. Eudoxus, at his first setting out in the world, threw himself into a court, where by his natural endowments and his acquired abilities he made his way from one post to another, till at length he had raised a very considerable fortune. Leontine on the contrary sought all opportunities of improving his mind by study, conversation and travel. He was not only acquainted with all the sciences, but with the most eminent professors of them throughout Europe. He knew perfectly well the interests of its princes, with the customs and fashions of their courts, and could scarce meet with the name of an extraordinary person in the *Gazette* whom he had not either talked to or seen. In short, he had so well mixt and digested his knowledge of men and books, that he made one of the most accomplished persons

of his age. During the whole course of his studies and travels he kept up a punctual correspondence with Eudoxus, who often made himself acceptable to the principal men about court by the intelligence which he received from Leontine. When they were both turned of forty (an age in which, according to Mr. Cowley, *there is no dallying with life*) they determined, pursuant to the resolution they had taken in the beginning of their lives, to retire, and pass the remainder of their days in the country. In order to this, they both of them married much about the same time. Leontine, with his own and his wife's fortune, bought a farm of three hundred a year, which lay within the neighbourhood of his friend Eudoxus, who had purchased an estate of as many thousands. They were both of them fathers about the same time, Eudoxus having a son born to him, and Leontine a daughter; but to the unspeakable grief of the latter, his young wife (in whom all his happiness was wrapt up) died in a few days after the birth of her daughter. His affliction would have been insupportable, had not he been comforted by the daily visits and conversations of his friend. As they were one day talking together with their usual intimacy, Leontine, considering how incapable he was of giving his daughter a proper education in his own house, and Eudoxus, reflecting on the ordinary behaviour of a son who knows himself to be the heir of a great estate, they both agreed upon an exchange of children, namely that the boy should be bred up with Leontine as his son, and that the girl should live with Eudoxus as his daughter, till they were each of them arrived at years of discretion. The wife of Eudoxus, knowing that her son could not be so advantageously brought up as under the care of Leontine, and considering at the same time that he would be perpetually under her own eye, was by degrees prevailed upon to fall in with the project. She therefore took Leonilla, for that was the name of the girl, and educated her as her own daughter. The two friends on each side had wrought themselves to such an habitual tenderness for the children who were under their direction, that each of them had the real passion of a father, where the title was but imaginary. Florio, the name of the young heir that lived with Leontine, though he had all the duty and affection imaginable for his supposed parent, was taught to rejoice at the sight of Eudoxus, who visited his friend very frequently, and was dictated by his natural affection, as well as by the rules of prudence, to make himself esteemed and beloved by Florio. The boy was now old enough to know his

supposed father's circumstances, and that therefore he was to make his way in the world by his own industry. This consideration grew stronger in him every day, and produced so good an effect, that he applied himself with more than ordinary attention to the pursuit of every thing which Leontine recommended to him. His natural abilities, which were very good, assisted by the directions of so excellent a counsellor, enabled him to make a quicker progress than ordinary through all the parts of his education. Before he was twenty years of age, having finished his studies and exercises with great applause, he was removed from the university to the Inns of Court, where there are very few that make themselves considerable proficients in the studies of the place, who know they shall arrive at great estates without them. This was not Florio's case; he found that three hundred a year was but a poor estate for Leontine and himself to live upon, so that he studied without intermission till he gained a very good insight into the constitution and laws of his country.

I should have told my reader, that whilst Florio lived at the house of his foster-father he was always an acceptable guest in the family of Eudoxus, where he became acquainted with Leonilla from her infancy. His acquaintance with her by degrees grew into love, which in a mind trained up in all the sentiments of honour and virtue became a very uneasy passion. He despaired of gaining an heiress of so great a fortune, and would rather have died than attempted it by any indirect methods. Leonilla, who was a woman of the greatest beauty joined with the greatest modesty, entertained at the same time a secret passion for Florio, but conducted herself with so much prudence that she never gave him the least intimation of it. Florio was now engaged in all those arts and improvements that are proper to raise a man's private fortune, and give him a figure in his country, but secretly tormented with that passion which burns with the greatest fury in a virtuous and noble heart, when he received a sudden summons from Leontine to repair to him in the country the next day. For it seems Eudoxus was so filled with the report of his son's reputation, that he could no longer withhold making himself known to him. The morning after his arrival at the house of his supposed father, Leontine told him that Eudoxus had something of great importance to communicate to him; upon which the good man embraced him and wept. Florio was no sooner arrived at the great house that stood in his neighbourhood, but Eudoxus took him by the

hand, after the first salutes were over, and conducted him into his closet. He there opened to him the whole secret of his parentage and education, concluding after this manner: *I have no other way left of acknowledging my gratitude to Leontine, than by marrying you to his daughter. He shall not lose the pleasure of being your father by the discovery I have made to you. Leonilla too shall be still my daughter; her filial piety, though misplaced, has been so exemplary that it deserves the greatest reward I can confer upon it. You shall have the pleasure of seeing a great estate fall to you, which you would have lost the relish of had you known yourself born to it. Continue only to deserve it in the same manner you did before you were possessed of it. I have left your mother in the next room. Her heart yearns towards you. She is making the same discoveries to Leonilla which I have made to yourself.* Florio was so overwhelmed with this profusion of happiness, that he was not able to make a reply, but threw himself down at his father's feet, and amidst a flood of tears, kissed and embraced his knees, asking his blessing, and expressing in dumb show those sentiments of love, duty, and gratitude that were too big for utterance. To conclude, the happy pair were married, and half Eudoxus's estate settled upon them. Leontine and Eudoxus passed the remainder of their lives together; and received in the dutiful and affectionate behaviour of Florio and Leonilla the just recompence, as well as the natural effects, of that care which they had bestowed upon them in their education.

THE WEDDING OF JENNY DISTAFF

RICHARD STEELE

Felices ter, et amplius,
Quos irrupta tenet copula; nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis,
Suprema citius solvet amor die.
HOR. *Od.* i. 13, 17.

MY sister Jenny's lover, the honest Tranquillus, for that shall be his name, has been impatient with me to despatch the necessary direction for his marriage; that while I am taken up with imaginary schemes, as he calls them, he might not burn with real desire, and the torture of expectation. When I

had reprimanded him for the ardour wherein he expressed himself, which I thought had not enough of that veneration with which the marriage-bed is to be ascended, I told him, "the day of his nuptials should be on the Saturday following, which was the eighth instant." On the seventh in the evening, poor Jenny came into my chamber, and, having her heart full of the great change of life from a virgin condition to that of a wife, she long sat silent. I saw she expected me to entertain her on this important subject, which was too delicate a circumstance for herself to touch upon; whereupon I relieved her modesty in the following manner: "Sister," said I, "you are now going from me: and be contented, that you leave the company of a talkative old man, for that of a sober young one: but take this along with you, that there is no mean in the state you are entering into, but you are to be exquisitely happy or miserable, and your fortune in this way of life will be wholly of your own making. In all the marriages I have ever seen, most of which have been unhappy ones, the great cause of evil has proceeded from slight occasions; but I take it to be the first maxim in a married condition, that you are to be above trifles. When two persons have so good an opinion of each other as to come together for life, they will not differ in matters of importance, because they think of each other with respect, in regard to all things of consideration that may affect them, and are prepared for mutual assistance and relief in such occurrences; but for less occasions, they have formed no resolutions, but leave their minds unprepared.

"This, dear Jenny, is the reason that the quarrel between Sir Harry Willit and his lady, which began about her squirrel, is irreconcilable. Sir Harry was reading a grave author; she runs into his study, and in a playing humour, claps the squirrel upon the folio: he threw the animal in a rage upon the floor; she snatches it up again, calls Sir Harry a sour pedant, without good nature or good manners. This cast him into such a rage, that he threw down the table before him, kicked the book round the room; then recollected himself: 'Lord, madam,' said he, 'why did you run into such expressions? I was,' said he, 'in the highest delight with that author, when you clapped your squirrel upon my book'; and, smiling, added upon recollection, 'I have a great respect for your favourite, and pray let us all be friends.' My lady was so far from accepting this apology, that she immediately conceived a resolution to keep him under for ever: and with a serious air replied, 'There is

no regard to be had to what a man says, who can fall into so indecent a rage, and such an abject submission, in the same moment, for which I absolutely despise you.' Upon which she rushed out of the room. Sir Harry staid some minutes behind, to think and command himself; after which he followed her into her bed-chamber, where she was prostrate upon the bed, tearing her hair, and naming twenty coxcombs who would have used her otherwise. This provoked him to so high a degree, that he forbore nothing but beating her; and all the servants in their family were at their several stations listening, whilst the best man and woman, the best master and mistress, defamed each other in a way that is not to be repeated even at Billingsgate. You know this ended in an immediate separation: she longs to return home, but knows not how to do it: he invites her home every day. Her husband requires no submission of her; but she thinks her very return will argue she is to blame, which she is resolved to be for ever, rather than acknowledge it. Thus, dear Jenny, my great advice to you is, be guarded against giving or receiving little provocations. Great matters of offence I have not reason to fear either from you or your husband."

After this, we turned our discourse into a more gay style, and parted: but before we did so, I made her resign her snuff-box [1] for ever, and half-drown herself with washing away the stench of the musty.[2]

But the wedding morning arrived, and our family being very numerous, there was no avoiding the inconvenience of making the ceremony and festival more public, than the modern way of celebrating them makes me approve of. The bride next morning came out of her chamber, dressed with all the art and care that Mrs. Toilet, the tire-woman, could bestow on her. She was on her wedding-day three-and-twenty; her person is far from what we call a regular beauty; but a certain sweetness in her countenance, an ease in her shape and motion, with an unaffected modesty in her looks, had attractions beyond what symmetry and exactness can inspire, without the addition of these endowments. When her lover entered the room, her features flushed with shame and joy; and the ingenuous manner, so full of passion and of awe, with which Tranquillus approached to salute her, gave me good omens of his future behaviour towards her. The wedding was wholly under my care. After

[1] Ladies took snuff habitually in Queen Anne's reign.
[2] A cheap kind of stuff.

the ceremony at church, I was resolved to entertain the company with a dinner suitable to the occasion, and pitched upon the Apollo[1] at the Old-Devil at Temple Bar, as a place sacred to mirth tempered with discretion, where Ben Jonson and his sons used to make their liberal meetings. Here the chief of the Staffian race appeared; and as soon as the company were come into that ample room, Lepidus Wagstaff began to make me compliments for choosing that place, and fell into a discourse upon the subject of pleasure and entertainment, drawn from the rules of Ben's club,[2] which are in gold letters over the chimney. Lepidus has a way very uncommon, and speaks on subjects on which any man else would certainly offend, with great dexterity. He gave us a large account of the public meetings of all the well-turned minds who had passed through this life in ages past, and closed his pleasing narrative with a discourse on marriage, and a repetition of the following verses out of Milton:[3]

> Hail, wedded love! mysterious law! true source
> Of human offspring, sole propriety
> In Paradise, of all things common else.
> By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
> Among the bestial herds to range; by thee
> Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
> Relations dear, and all the charities
> Of father, son, and brother, first were known . . .
> Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets
> Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
> Present or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
> Here Love his golden shafts employs; here lights
> His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings:
> Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
> Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,
> Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
> Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
> Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
> To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.

In these verses, all the images that can come into young woman's head on such an occasion are raised; but that in so chaste and elegant a manner, that the bride thanked him for his agreeable talk, and we sat down to dinner. . . .

October 11, 1709.

[1] This was the great room of the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar. *Cf.* Shadwell's *Bury Fair*, 1680, quoted by Cunningham in his *London*, 1850, p. 154: "*Oldwit.* I myself, simple as I stand here, was a wit in the last age. I was created Ben Jonson's son in the *Apollo*."

[2] Ben Jonson's *Leges Conviviales*, which are printed in his works. Cunningham saw them in 1843 at Messrs. Child's Banking House. They were engraved in gold letter upon board.

[3] *See* Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. iv. ll. 750–770.

LE FEVRE

LAURENCE STERNE

He was one evening sitting at his supper, when the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlour, with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or two of sack. "'Tis for a poor gentleman—I think of the army," said the landlord, "who has been taken ill at my house four days ago, and has never held up his head since, or had a desire to taste anything till just now, that he has a fancy for a glass of sack and a thin toast." "*I think*," said he, taking his hand from his forehead, "*it would comfort me*."

"If I could neither beg, borrow, nor buy such a thing," added the landlord, "I would almost steal it for the poor gentleman, he is so ill. I hope in God he will still mend," continued he; "we are all of us concerned for him."

"Thou art a good-natured soul, I will answer for thee," cried my uncle Toby, "and thou shalt drink the poor gentleman's health in a glass of sack thyself, and take a couple of bottles, with my service, and tell him he is heartily welcome to them, and to a dozen more if they will do him good."

"Though I am persuaded," said my uncle Toby, as the landlord shut the door, "he is a very compassionate fellow, Trim, yet I cannot help entertaining a high opinion of his guest too; there must be something more than common in him, that in so short a time should win so much on the affections of his host." "And of his whole family," added the corporal, "for they are all concerned for him." "Step after him," said my uncle Toby, "do Trim, and ask if he knows his name."

"I have quite forgot it, truly," said the landlord, coming back into the parlour with the corporal; "but I can ask his son again." "Has he a son with him then," said my uncle Toby. "A boy," replied the landlord, "of about eleven or twelve years of age; but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day; he has not stirred from the bedside these two days."

My uncle Toby laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate before him as the landlord gave him the account; and Trim, without being ordered, took it away without saying one

word, and in a few minutes after brought him his pipe and tobacco.

"Stay in the room a little," said my uncle Toby. "Trim!" said my uncle Toby, after he had lighted his pipe and smoked about a dozen whiffs. Trim came in front of his master, and made his bow;—my uncle Toby smoked on and said no more. "Corporal!" said my uncle Toby; the corporal made his bow. My uncle Toby proceeded no farther, but finished his pipe.

"Trim!" said my uncle Toby, "I have a project in my head, as it is a bad night, of wrapping myself up warm in my roquelaur, and paying a visit to this poor gentleman." "Your honour's roquelaur," replied the corporal, "has not once been had on, since the night before your honour received your wound, when we mounted guard in the trenches before the gate at St. Nicholas; and besides it is so cold and rainy at night, that what with the roquelaur, and what with the weather, 'twill be enough to give your honour your death, and bring on your honour's torment in your groin." "I fear so," replied my uncle Toby; "but I am not at rest in my mind, Trim, since the account the landlord has given me. I wish I had not known so much of this affair," added my uncle Toby, "or that I had known more of it: how shall we manage it?" "Leave it, an' please your honour, to me," quoth the corporal; "I'll take my hat and stick and go to the house and reconnoitre, and act accordingly; and I will bring your honour a full account in an hour." "Thou shalt go, Trim," said my uncle Toby, "and here's a shilling for thee to drink with his servant." "I shall get it all out of him," said the corporal, shutting the door.

My uncle Toby filled his second pipe; and had it not been that he now and then wandered from the point, with considering whether it was not full as well to have the curtain of the tenaille a straight line, as a crooked one, he might be said to have thought of nothing else but poor Le Fevre and his boy the whole time he smoked it.

It was not till my uncle Toby had knocked the ashes out of his third pipe that corporal Trim returned from the inn, and gave him the following account:

"I despaired at first," said the corporal, "of being able to bring back to your honour any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant." "Is he in the army, then?" said my uncle Toby. "He is," said the corporal. "And in what regiment?" said my uncle Toby. "I'll tell your honour," replied the corporal, "everything straight forwards, as I learnt

it." "Then, Trim, I'll fill another pipe," said my uncle Toby, "and not interrupt thee till thou hast done; so sit down at thy ease, Trim, in the window seat, and begin thy story again." The corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke as plain as a bow could speak it—*your honour is good:*—and having done that, he sat down as he was ordered, and began the story to my uncle Toby over again, in pretty nearly the same words. "I despaired at first," said the corporal, "of being able to bring back any intelligence to your honour about the lieutenant and his son: for when I asked where his servant was, from whom I made myself sure of knowing everything which was proper to be asked,"—"That's a right distinction, Trim," said my uncle Toby,—"I was answered, an' please your honour, that he had no servant with him; that he had come to the inn with hired horses, which, on finding himself unable to proceed (to join, I suppose, the regiment), he had dismissed the morning after he came 'If I get better, my dear,' said he, as he gave his purse to his son to pay the man, 'we can hire horses from hence.' 'But, alas! the poor gentleman will never get from hence,' said the landlady to me, 'for I heard the death-watch all night long; and when he dies, the youth, his son, will certainly die with him; for he is broken-hearted already.'

"I was hearing this account," continued the corporal, "when the youth came into the kitchen, to order the thin toast the landlord spoke of. 'But I will do it for my father myself,' said the youth. 'Pray let me save you the trouble, young gentleman,' said I, taking up a fork for that purpose, and offering him my chair to sit down by the fire, whilst I did it. 'I believe, sir,' said he, very modestly, 'I can please him best myself.' 'I am sure,' said I, 'his honour will not like the toast the worse for being toasted by an old soldier.' The youth took hold of my hand, and instantly burst into tears." "Poor youth!" said my uncle Toby, "he has been bred up from an infant in the army, and the name of a soldier, Trim, sounded in his ears like the name of a friend; I wish I had him here."

"I never in the longest march," said the corporal, "had so great a mind to my dinner, as I had to cry with him for company: what could be the matter with me, an' please your honour?" "Nothing in the world, Trim," said my uncle Toby, blowing his nose, "but that thou art a good-natured fellow."

"When I gave him the toast," continued the corporal, "I thought it was proper to tell him I was Captain Shandy's servant, and that your honour (though a stranger) was ex-

tremely concerned for his father: and that if there was anything in your house or cellar,"—"And thou mightest have added my purse too," said my uncle Toby,—"he was heartily welcome to it: he made a very low bow (which was meant to your honour), but no answer, for his heart was so full—so he went upstairs with the toast: 'I warrant you, my dear,' said I, as I opened the kitchen door, 'your father will be well again.' Mr. Yorick's curate was smoking a pipe by the kitchen fire; but said not a word, good or bad, to comfort the youth. I thought it wrong," added the corporal. "I think so too," said my uncle Toby.

"When the lieutenant had taken his glass of sack and toast, he felt himself a little revived, and sent down into the kitchen to let me know that in about ten minutes he should be glad if I would step upstairs. 'I believe,' said the landlord, 'he is going to say his prayers, for there was a book laid upon the chair by his bed-side, and as I shut the door I saw his son take up a cushion.'

"'I thought,' said the curate, 'that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. Trim, never said your prayers at all.' 'I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night,' said the landlady, 'very devoutly, and with my own ears, or I could not have believed it.' 'Are you sure of it?' replied the curate. 'A soldier, an' please your reverence,' said I, 'prays as often (of his own accord) as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king, and for his own life, and for his honour too, he has the most reason to pray to God of anyone in the whole world.'"

"'Twas well said of thee, Trim," said my uncle Toby. "'But when a soldier,' said I, 'an' please your reverence, has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches, up to his knees in cold water, or engaged,' said I, 'for months together in long and dangerous marches—harassed, perhaps, in his rear to-day—harassing others to-morrow—detached here—countermanded there—resting this night out upon his arms—beat up in his shirt the next—benumbed in his joints—perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel upon—may say his prayers *how* and *when* he can. I believe,' said I, for I was piqued," quoth the corporal, "for the reputation of the army; 'I believe, an' please your reverence,' said I, 'that when a soldier gets time to pray, he prays as heartily as a parson, though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.'" "Thou shouldst not have said that, Trim," said my uncle Toby; "for God only knows who is a hypocrite, and who is not; at the great and general review of us all, corporal, at the day of judgment (and not till then), it

will be seen who have done their duties in this world, and who have not; and we shall be advanced, Trim, accordingly." "I hope we shall," said Trim. "It is in the scripture," said my uncle Toby; "and I will show it thee to-morrow; in the meantime we may depend upon it, Trim, for our comfort," said my uncle Toby, "that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it, it will never be inquired into whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one." "I hope not," said the corporal. "But go on, Trim," said my uncle Toby, "with thy story."

"When I went up," continued the corporal, "into the lieutenant's room, which I did not do till the expiration of the ten minutes, he was lying in his bed, with his head raised upon his hand, with his elbow upon the pillow, and a clean white cambric handkerchief beside it. The youth was just stooping down to take up the cushion, upon which I supposed he had been kneeling. The book was laid upon the bed; and as he rose, in taking up the cushion with one hand, he reached out his other to take it away at the same time. 'Let it remain there, my dear,' said the lieutenant.

"He did not offer to speak to me till I had walked up close to his bedside. 'If you be Captain Shandy's servant,' said he, 'you must present my thanks to your master, with my little boy's thanks along with them, for his courtesy to me; if he was of Leven's,' said the lieutenant. I told him your honour was. 'Then,' said he, 'I served three campaigns with him in Flanders, and remember him, but 'tis most likely, as I had not the honour of any acquaintance with him, that he knows nothing of me. You will tell him, however, that the person his good nature has laid under obligations to him, is one Le Fevre, a lieutenant in Angus's—but he knows me not,' said he a second time, musing—'possibly he may my story,' added he—'pray tell the captain I was the ensign at Breda, whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket shot, as she lay in my arms in my tent.' 'I remember the story, an' please your honour,' said I, 'very well.' 'Do you so?' said he, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief, 'then well may I.' In saying this, he drew a little ring out of his bosom, which seemed tied with a black riband about his neck, and kissed it twice. 'Here, Billy,' said he—the boy flew across the room to the bedside, and falling down upon his knee, took the ring in his hand, and kissed it too; then kissed his father, and sat down upon the bed and wept."

"I wish," said my uncle Toby, with a deep sigh, "I wish, Trim, I was asleep."

"Your honour," replied the corporal, "is too much concerned; shall I pour your honour out a glass of sack to your pipe?" "Do Trim," said my uncle Toby.

"I remember," said my uncle Toby, sighing again, "the story of the ensign and his wife, with a circumstance his modesty omitted; and particularly well, that he, as well as she, on some account or other (I have forgot what), was universally pitied by the whole regiment. But finish the story thou art on." "'Tis finished already," said the corporal, "for I could stay no longer, so wished his honour a good night: young Le Fevre rose from off the bed, and saw me to the bottom of the stairs; and as we went down together, told me they had come from Ireland, and were on their route to join the regiment in Flanders. But, alas!" said the corporal, "the lieutenant's last day's march is over." "Then what is to become of his poor boy?" cried my uncle Toby.

It was to my uncle Toby's eternal honour, though I tell it only for the sake of those who, when cooped in betwixt a natural and a positive law, know not for their souls which way in the world to turn themselves—that notwithstanding my uncle Toby was warmly engaged at that time in carrying on the siege of Dendermond, parallel with the allies, who pressed theirs on so vigorously, that they scarcely allowed him time to get his dinner, that nevertheless he gave up Dendermond, though he had already made a lodgment upon the counterscarp; and bent his whole thoughts towards the distresses at the inn; and, except that he ordered the garden gate to be bolted up, by which he might be said to have turned the siege of Dendermond into a blockade, he left Dendermond to itself, to be relieved or not by the French king, as the French king thought good; and only considered how he himself should relieve the poor lieutenant and his son.

That kind Being, who is a friend to the friendless, shall recompense thee for this.

"Thou hast left this matter short," said my uncle Toby to the corporal as he was putting him to bed, "and I will tell thee in what, Trim. In the first place, when thou madest an offer of my services to Le Fevre, as sickness and travelling are both expensive, and thou knowest he was but a poor lieutenant, with a son to subsist as well as himself out of his pay, that thou didst not make an offer to him of my purse; because, had he stood

in need, thou knowest, Trim, he had been as welcome to it as myself." "Your honour knows," said the corporal, "I had no orders." "True," quoth my uncle Toby, "thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier, but certainly very wrong as a man.

"In the second place, for which indeed thou hast the same excuse," continued my uncle Toby, "when thou offeredest him whatever was in my house, thou shouldst have offered him my house too: a sick brother officer should have the best quarters, Trim, and if we had him with us, we could tend and look to him: thou art an excellent nurse thyself, Trim, and what with thy care of him, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might recruit him again at once, and set him upon his legs.

"In a fortnight or three weeks," added my uncle Toby, smiling, "he might march." "He will never march, an' please your honour, in this world," said the corporal. "He *will* march," said my uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off. "An' please your honour," said the corporal, "he will never march but to his grave." "He *shall* march," cred my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch, "he shall march to his regiment." "He cannot stand it," said the corporal. "He shall be *supported*," said my uncle Toby. "He'll drop at last," said the corporal, "and what will become of his boy?" "*He shall not drop*," said my uncle Toby, firmly. "A-well-a-day, do what we can for him," said Trim, maintaining his point, "the poor soul will die." "*He shall not die, by God!*" cried my uncle Toby.

The accusing Spirit, which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; and the Recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

My uncle Toby went to his bureau, put his purse into his breeches pocket, and having ordered the corporal to go early in the morning for a physician, he went to bed, and fell fast asleep.

The sun looked bright the morning after, to every eye in the village but Le Fevre's and his afflicted son's; the hand of death pressed heavy upon his eyelids, and hardly could the wheel at the cistern turn round its circle, when my uncle Toby, who had risen an hour before his wonted time, entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology, sat himself down upon the chair by the bedside, and independently of all modes and

customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it, and asked him how he did—how he had rested in the night—what was his complaint—where was his pain—and what he could do to help him—and without giving him time to answer any one of the enquiries, went on and told him of the little plan which he had been concerting with the corporal the night before for him.

" You shall go home directly, Le Fevre," said my uncle Toby, " to my house—and we'll send for a doctor to see what's the matter—and we'll have an apothecary—and the corporal shall be your nurse—and I'll be your servant, Le Fevre."

There was a frankness in my uncle Toby, not the *effect* of familiarity, but the cause of it, which let you at once into his soul, and showed you the goodness of his nature; to this there was something in his looks, and voice, and manner, superadded, which eternally beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him; so that before my uncle Toby had half finished the kind offers he was making to the father, had the son insensibly pressed up close to his knees, and had taken hold of the breast of his coat, and was pulling it towards him. The blood and spirits of Le Fevre, which were waxing old and slow within him, and were retreating to the last citadel, the heart rallied back—the film forsook his eyes for a moment—he looked up wistfully in my uncle Toby's face—then cast a look upon his boy—and that *ligament*, fine as it was, was never broken.

Nature instantly ebbed again—the film returned to its place—the pulse fluttered—stopped—went on—throbbed—stopped again—moved—stopped—shall I go on? No.

From " Tristram Shandy."

MARIA

LAURENCE STERNE

THE FIRST PART

THEY were the sweetest notes I ever heard; and I instantly let down the foreglass to hear them more distinctly. " 'Tis Maria," said the postillion, observing I was listening: " poor Maria," continued he (leaning his body on one side to let me see her, for he was in a line betwixt us), " is sitting upon a bank

playing her vespers upon her pipe, with her little goat beside her."

The young fellow uttered this with an accent and a look so perfectly in tune to a feeling heart, that I instantly made a vow I would give him a four-and-twenty sous piece when I arrived at Moulines.

"And who is poor Maria?" said I.

"The love and pity of all the villagers around us," said the postillion. "It is but three years ago that the sun did not shine upon so fair, so quick-witted and amiable a maid; and better fate did Maria deserve than to have her banns forbidden by the intrigues of the curate of the parish who published them."

He was going on, when Maria, who had made a short pause, put the pipe to her mouth and began the air again—they were the same notes; yet were ten times sweeter. "It is the evening service to the Virgin," said the young man; "but who has taught her to play it, or how she came by her pipe, no one knows; we think that heaven has assisted her in both; for, ever since she has been unsettled in her mind, it seems her only consolation: she has never once had the pipe out of her hand, but plays that service upon it almost night and day."

The postillion delivered this with so much discretion and natural eloquence that I could not help deciphering something in his face above his condition, and should have sifted out his history, had not poor Maria's taken such full possession of me.

We had arrived by this time almost to the bank where Maria was sitting: she was in a thin white jacket, with her hair, all but two tresses, drawn up into a silken net, with a few olive leaves twisted a little fantastically on one side—she was beautiful: and if ever I felt the full force of an honest heartache, it was the moment I saw her.

"God help her, poor damsel! above a hundred masses," said the postillion, "have been said in the several parish churches and convents around for her, but without effect. We have still hopes, as she is sensible for short intervals, that the Virgin at last will restore her to herself; but her parents, who know her best, are hopeless on that score, and think her senses are lost for ever."

As the postillion spoke this, Maria made a cadence so melancholy, so tender and querulous, that I sprung out of the chaise to help her, and found myself sitting betwixt her and her goat before I relapsed from my enthusiasm.

Maria looked wistfully for some time at me, and then at her

goat, and then at me, and then at her goat again, and so on alternately.

"Well, Maria," said I softly, "what resemblance do you find?"

I do entreat the candid reader to believe me, that it was from the humblest conviction of what a *beast* man is, that I asked the question; and that I would not have let fall an unseasonable pleasantry in the venerable presence of misery, to be entitled to all the wit that ever Rabelais scattered.

Adieu, Maria; adieu, poor hapless damsel! some time, but not now, I may hear thy sorrows from thy own lips—but I was deceived; for that moment she took her pipe, and told me such a tale of woe with it, that I rose up, and with broken and irregular steps walked softly to the chaise.

THE SECOND PART

The state of that disordered maid affected me not a little; and when I came again within the neighbourhood where she lived, it returned so strong into my mind, that I could not resist an impulse which prompted me to go half a league out of the road, to the village where her parents dwelt, to inquire after her. The old mother came to the door; her looks told me the story before she opened her mouth. She had lost her husband. "He had died," she said, "of anguish for the loss of Maria's senses, about a month before. She had feared at first," she added, "that it would have plundered her poor girl of what little understanding was left; but, on the contrary, it had brought her more to herself—still she could not rest—her poor daughter," she said, crying, "was wandering somewhere about the road."

Why does my pulse beat languid as I write this? and what made Le Fleur, whose heart seemed only to be tuned to joy, to pass the back of his hand twice across his eyes, as the woman stood and told it?

When we had reached within half a league of Moulines, at a little opening in the road leading to a thicket, I discovered poor Maria sitting under a poplar. She was sitting with her elbow in her lap, and her head leaning on one side within her hand: a small brook ran at the foot of the tree.

She was dressed in white, and much as I have described her, except that her hair hung loose, which before was twisted within a silken net. She had superadded likewise to her jacket, a pale

green riband, which fell across her shoulder to the waist, at the end of which hung her pipe. Her goat had been as faithless as her lover; and she had obtained a little dog in lieu of him, which she had kept tied by a string to her girdle; as I looked at her dog, she drew him towards her with the string. "Thou shalt not leave me, Sylvio," said she. I looked in Maria's eyes, and saw she was thinking more of her father than of her lover or her little goat; for as she uttered them the tears trickled down her cheeks.

I sat down close by her, and Maria let me wipe them away, as they fell, with my handkerchief. I then steeped it in my own —and then in hers—and then in mine—and then I wiped hers again—and, as I did it, I felt such undescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion.

I am positive I have a soul; nor can all the books with which materialists have pestered the world ever convince me of the contrary.

When Maria had come a little to herself, I asked her if she remembered a pale thin person of a man, who had sat down betwixt her and her goat, about two years before? She said she was unsettled much at that time, but remembered it on two accounts; that ill as she was, she saw the person pitied her; and next, that her goat had stolen his handkerchief, and she had beaten him for the theft. She had washed it, she said, in the brook, and kept it ever since in her pocket to restore it to him in case she should ever see him again, which, she added, he had half promised her. As she told me this, she took the handkerchief out of her pocket to let me see it; she had folded it up neatly in a couple of vine leaves, tied round with a tendril—on opening it, I saw an S marked on one of the corners.

She had since that, she told me, strayed as far as Rome, and walked round St. Peter's once, and returned back; that she found her way alone across the Apennines, had travelled over all Lombardy without money, and through the flinty roads of Savoy without shoes; how she had borne it, and how she had been supported, she could not tell; but God *tempers the wind*, said Maria, to the shorn lamb.

"Shorn indeed! and to the quick," said I; "and wast thou in my own land, where I have a cottage, I would take thee to it and shelter thee; thou shouldest eat of my own bread, and drink of my own cup. I would be kind to thy Sylvio—in all thy weakness and wanderings I would seek after thee, and

bring thee back—when the sun went down I would say my prayers—and when I had done, thou shouldest play thy evening song upon thy pipe; nor would the incense of my sacrifice be worse accepted for entering heaven along with that of a broken heart."

Nature melted within me as I uttered this; and Maria observing as I took out my handkerchief, that it was steeped too much already to be of use, would needs go wash it in the stream. "And where will you dry it, Maria?" said I. "I'll dry it in my bosom," said she—"'twill do me good."

"And is your heart still so warm, Maria?" said I.

I touched upon the string on which hung all her sorrows; she looked with wistful disorder for some time in my face, and then, without saying anything, took her pipe, and played her service to the Virgin; the string I had touched ceased to vibrate—in a moment or two Maria returned to herself—let her pipe fall—and rose up.

"And where are you going, Maria?" said I. She said, "To Moulines." "Let us go," said I, "together." Maria put her arm within mine, and lengthening the string to let her dog follow—in that order we entered Moulines.

Though I hate salutations and greetings in the market-place, yet when we were in the middle of this, I stopped to take my last look and last farewell of Maria.

Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms—affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarce earthly—still she was feminine—and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in woman, that could the traces be ever worn out of her brain and those of Eliza's out of mine, she should *not only eat of my bread and drink of my own cup*, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.

Adieu, poor luckless maiden! Imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger, as he journeyeth on his way, now pours into thy wounds—the Being who has twice bruised thee, can only bind them up for ever.

THE THIRD PART

On my next arrival at Moulines, I inquired after this disconsolate maid, and was informed she had breathed her last ten days after I had seen her. I informed myself of the place of her burial, whither I repaired; but there was

Not a stone to tell where she lay.

However, by the freshness of the surface of the earth which had been removed, I soon traced out her grave, where I paid the last tribute due to virtue; nor did I grudge a tear.

Alas, sweet maid, thou art gone! but it is to be numbered with angels, whose fair representative thou wast upon earth. Thy cup of bitterness was full, too full to hold, and it hath run over into eternity. There wilt thou find the gall of life converted into the sweets, the purest sweets of immortal felicity.

THE STORY OF MELISSA

JOHN HAWKESWORTH

Sit mihi fas audita loqui—

VIRG.

What I have heard, permit me to relate.

I RECEIVED, a few weeks ago, an account of the death of a lady whose name is known to many, but the "eventful history" of whose life has been communicated to few: to me it has been often related during a long and intimate acquaintance; and as there is not a single person living, upon whom the making it public can reflect unmerited dishonour, or whose delicacy or virtue can suffer by the relation, I think I owe to mankind a series of events from which the wretched may derive comfort, and the most forlorn may be encouraged to hope; as misery is alleviated by the contemplation of yet deeper distress, and the mind fortified against despair by instances of unexpected relief.

The father of Melissa was the younger son of a country gentleman who possessed an estate of about five hundred a year; but as this was to be the inheritance of the elder brother, and as there were three sisters to be provided for, he was at about sixteen taken from Eton school, and apprenticed to a considerable merchant at Bristol. The young gentleman, whose imagination had been fired by the exploits of heroes, the victories gained by magnanimous presumption, and the wonders discovered by daring curiosity, was not disposed to consider the acquisition of wealth as the limit of his ambition, or the repute of honest industry as the total of his fame. He regarded his situation as servile and ignominious, as the degradation of his genius and the preclusion of his hopes; and longing to go in search of

adventures, he neglected his business as unworthy of his attention, heard the remonstrances of his master with a kind of sullen disdain, and after two years' legal slavery made his escape, and at the next town enlisted himself a soldier; not doubting but that, by his military merit and the fortune of war, he should return a general officer, to the confusion of those who would have buried him in the obscurity of a compting-house. He found means effectually to elude the inquiries of his friends, as it was of the utmost importance to prevent their officious endeavours to ruin his project and obstruct his advancement.

He was sent with other recruits to London, and soon after quartered with the rest of his company in a part of the country, which was so remote from all with whom he had any connection, that he no longer dreaded a discovery.

It happened that he went one day to the house of a neighbouring gentleman with his comrade, who was become acquainted with the chamber-maid, and by her interest admitted into the kitchen. This gentleman, whose age was something more than sixty, had been about two years married to a second wife, a young woman who had been well educated, and lived in the polite world, but had no fortune. By his first wife, who had been dead about ten years, he had several children; the youngest was a daughter who had just entered her seventeenth year; she was very tall for her age, had a fine complexion, good features, and was well shaped; but her father, whose affection for her was mere instinct, as much as that of a brute for his young, utterly neglected her education. It was impossible for him, he said, to live without her; and as he could not afford to have her attended by a governess and proper masters in a place so remote from London, she was suffered to continue illiterate and unpolished; she knew no entertainment higher than a game at romps with the servants; she became their confident, and trusted them in return, nor did she think herself happy anywhere but in the kitchen.

As the capricious fondness of her father had never conciliated her affection, she perceived it abate upon his marriage without regret. She suffered no new restraint from her new mother, who observed with a secret satisfaction that miss had been used to hide herself from visitors, as neither knowing how to behave nor being fit to be seen, and chose rather to conceal her defects by excluding her from company, than to supply them by putting her to a boarding-school.

Miss, who had been told by Betty that she expected her

sweetheart, and that they were to be merry, stole down stairs, and, without scruple, made one in a party at blindman's buff. The soldier of fortune was struck with her person, and discovered, or thought he discovered, in the simplicity of nature, some graces which are polished away by the labour of art. However, nothing that had the appearance of an adventure could be indifferent to him; and his vanity was flattered by the hope of carrying off a young lady under the disguise of a common soldier, without revealing his birth or boasting of his expectations.

In this attempt he became very assiduous, and succeeded. The company being ordered to another place, Betty and her young mistress departed early in the morning with their gallants; and there being a privileged chapel in the next town, they were married.

The old gentleman, as soon as he was informed that his daughter was missing, made so diligent and scrupulous an inquiry after her, that he learned with whom and which way she was gone: he mounted his horse, and pursued her, not without curses and imprecations; discovering rather the transports of rage than the emotions of tenderness, and resenting her offence rather as the rebellion of a slave than the disobedience of a child. He did not however overtake them till the marriage had been consummated; of which when he was informed by the husband, he turned from him with expressions of brutality and indignation, swearing never to forgive a fault which he had taken no care to prevent.

The young couple, notwithstanding their union frequently doubled their distress, still continued fond of each other. The spirit of enterprise and the hope of presumption were not yet quelled in the young soldier; and he received orders to attend King William, when he went to the siege of Namur, with exultation and transport, believing his elevation to independence and distinction as certain as if he had been going to take possession of a title and estate. His wife, who had been some months pregnant, as she had no means of subsistence in his absence, procured a passage with him. When she came on shore, and mingled with the crowd that followed the camp, wretches who without compunction wade in human blood to strip the dying and the dead, to whom horror is become familiar and compassion impossible, she was terrified: the discourse of the women, rude and unpolished as she was, covered her with confusion; and the brutal familiarity of the men filled her with indignation

and disgust; her maid, Betty, who had also attended her husband, was the only person with whom she could converse, and from whom she could hope the assistance of which she was so soon to stand in need.

In the meantime she found it difficult to subsist; but accidentally hearing the name of an officer, whom she remembered to have visited her mother soon after her marriage, she applied to him, told him her name, and requested that he would afford her his protection, and permit her to take care of his linen. With this request the captain complied; her circumstances became less distressed, and her mind more easy: but a new calamity suddenly overtook her; she saw her husband march to an engagement in the morning, and saw him brought back desperately wounded at night. The next day he was removed, in a waggon with many others who were in the same condition, to a place of greater safety, at the distance of about three leagues, where proper care might be taken of their wounds. She intreated the captain to let her go in the waggon with him; but to this he could not consent, because the waggon would be filled with those who were neither able to walk, nor could be left behind. He promised, however, that if she would stay till the next day, he would endeavour to procure her a passage; but she chose rather to follow the waggon on foot, than to be absent from her husband. She could not, however, keep pace with it, and she reached the hospital but just time enough to kneel down by him upon some clean straw, to see him sink under the last agony, and hear the groan that is repeated no more. The fatigue of the journey, and the perturbation of her mind, immediately threw her into labour, and she lived but to be delivered of Melissa, who was thus in the most helpless state left without father, mother, or friend, in a foreign country, in circumstances which could afford no hope of reward to the tenderness that should attempt the preservation of her life, and among persons who were become obdurate and insensible, by having been long used to see every species of distress.

It happened that, among those whom accident or distress had brought together at the birth of Melissa, there was a young woman, whose husband had fallen in the late engagement, and who a few days before had lost a little boy that she suckled. This person, rather perhaps to relieve herself from an inconveniency, than in compassion to the orphan, put it to her breast: but whatever was her motive, she believed that the affording sustenance to the living, conferred a right to the apparel of the

dead, of which she therefore took possession; but in searching her pockets she found only a thimble, the remains of a pocket looking-glass, about the value of a penny in Dutch money, and the certificate of her marriage. The paper, which she could not read, she gave afterwards to the captain, who was touched with pity at the relation which an inquiry after his laundress produced. He commended the woman who had preserved the infant, and put her into the place of its mother. This encouraged her to continue her care of it till the captain returned to England, with whom she also returned, and became his servant.

This gentleman, as soon as he had settled his immediate concerns, sent Melissa, under the care of her nurse, to her grandfather; and inclosed the certificate of her mother's marriage in a letter containing an account of her death, and the means by which the infant had been preserved. He knew that those who had been once dear to us, by whatever offence they may have alienated our affection when living, are generally remembered with tenderness when dead; and that after the grave has sheltered them from our resentment, and rendered reconciliation impossible, we often regret, as severe, that conduct which before we approved as just; he, therefore, hoped that the parental fondness which an old man had once felt for his daughter, would revive at the sight of her offspring; that the memory of her fault would be lost in the sense of her misfortunes; and that he would endeavour to atone for that inexorable resentment which produced them, by cherishing a life, to which she had, as it were, transferred her own. But in these expectations, however reasonable, he was mistaken. The old man, when he was informed by the messenger that the child she held in her arms was his grand-daughter, whom she was come to put under his protection, refused to examine the contents of the letter, and dismissed her with menaces and insult. The knowledge of every uncommon event soon becomes general in a country town. An uncle of Melissa's, who had been rejected by his father for having married his maid, heard this fresh instance of his brutality with grief and indignation; he sent immediately for the child and the letter, and assured the servant that his niece should want nothing which he could bestow; to bestow much, indeed, was not in his power, for his father having obstinately persisted in his resentment, his whole support was a little farm which he rented of the 'squire: but as he was a good economist and had no children of his own, he lived decently;

nor did he throw away content, because his father had denied him affluence.

Melissa, who was compassionated for her mother's misfortunes, of which her uncle had been particularly informed by her maid Betty, who had returned a widow to her friends in the country, was not less beloved for her good qualities; she was taught to read and write, and work at her needle, as soon as she was able to learn; and she was taken notice of by all the gentry as the prettiest girl in the place; but her aunt died when she was about eleven years old, and before she was thirteen she lost her uncle.

She was now again thrown back upon the world, still helpless, though her wants were increased, and wretched in proportion as she had known happiness: she looked back with anguish, and forward with distraction; a fit of crying had just afforded a momentary relief, when the 'squire, who had been informed of the death of his tenant, sent for her to his house.

This gentleman had heard her story from her uncle, and was unwilling that a life which had been preserved almost by miracle, should at last be abandoned to misery; he therefore determined to receive her into his family, not as a servant but as a companion to his daughter, a young lady finely accomplished, and now about fifteen. The old gentleman was touched with her distress, and miss received her with great tenderness and complacency: she wiped away her tears; and of the intolerable anguish of her mind, nothing remained but a tender remembrance of her uncle, whom she loved and reverenced as a parent. She had now courage to examine the contents of a little box which he had put into her hand just before he expired; she found in it only the certificate of her mother's marriage, enclosed in the captain's letter, and an account of the events that have been before related, which her uncle had put down as they came to his knowledge: the train of mournful ideas that now rushed upon her mind, raised emotions which, if they could not be suppressed by reason, were soon destroyed by their own violence.

* * * * * * *

In this family, which in a few weeks after returned to London, Melissa soon became a favourite: the good 'squire seemed to consider her as his child, and miss as her sister; she was taught dancing and music, introduced to the best company, elegantly dressed, and allowed such sums as were necessary for trivial expenses. Youth seldom suffers the dread of to-morrow to

intrude upon the enjoyment of to-day, but rather regards present felicity as the pledge of future: Melissa was probably as happy as if she had been in the actual possession of a fortune, that, to the ease and splendour which she enjoyed already, would have added stability and independence.

She was now in her eighteenth year, and the only son of her benefactor was just come from the university to spend the winter with his father in town. He was charmed with her person, behaviour, and discourse; and what he could not but admire, he took every opportunity to commend. She soon perceived that he showed particular marks of respect to her, when he thought they would not be perceived by others; and that he endeavoured to recommend himself by an officious assiduity, and a diligent attention to the most minute circumstances that might contribute to her pleasure. But this behaviour of the young gentleman, however it might gratify her vanity, could not fail to alarm her fear; she foresaw, that if what she had remarked in his conduct should be perceived by his father or sister, the peace of the family would be destroyed; and that she must either be shipwrecked in the storm, or thrown overboard to appease it. She therefore affected not to perceive that more than a general complaisance was intended by her lover, and hoped that he would thus be discouraged from making an explicit declaration; but though he was mortified at her disregard of that which he knew she could not but see, yet he determined to address her in such terms as should not leave this provoking neutrality in her power: though he reverenced her virtue, yet he feared too much the anger of his father to think of making her his wife; and he was too deeply enamoured of her beauty, to relinquish his hopes of possessing her as a mistress. An opportunity for the execution of his purpose was not long wanting: she received his general professions of love with levity and merriment; but when she perceived that his view was to seduce her to prostitution, she burst into tears, and fell back in an agony, unable to speak. He was immediately touched with grief and remorse; his tenderness was alarmed at her distress, and his esteem increased by her virtue; he catched her in his arms, and as an atonement for the insult she had received, he offered her marriage: but as her chastity would not suffer her to become his mistress, neither would her gratitude permit her to become his wife; and as soon as she was sufficiently recollected, she intreated him never more to urge her to violate the obligation she was under either to herself or to her benefactor.

"Would not," said she, "the presence of a wretch whom you had seduced from innocence and peace to remorse and guilt, perpetually upbraid you; and would you not always fear to be betrayed by a wife, whose fidelity no kindness could secure; who had broken all the bands that restrain the generous and the good; and who, by an act of the most flagitious ingratitude, had at once reached the pinnacle of guilt, to which others ascend by imperceptible gradations?"

These objections, though they could neither be obviated nor evaded, had yet no tendency to subdue desire; he loved with greater delicacy, but with more ardour: and as he could not always forbear expostulations, neither could she always silence them in such a manner as might most effectually prevent their being repeated. Such was one morning the situation of the two lovers: he had taken her hand into his, and was speaking with great earnestness; while she regarded him with a kind of timorous complacency, and listened to him with an attention which her heart condemned: his father, in this tender moment, in which their powers of perception were mutually engrossed by each other came near enough to hear that his heir had made proposals of marriage, and retired without their knowledge.

As he did not dream that such a proposal could possibly be rejected by a girl in Melissa's situation, imagining that every woman believed her virtue to be inviolate, if her person was not prostituted, he took his measures accordingly. It was near the time in which his family had been used to remove into the country: he therefore, gave orders, that every thing should be immediately prepared for the journey, and that the coach should be ready at six the next morning, a man and horse being dispatched in the mean time to give notice of their arrival. The young folks were a little surprised at this sudden removal; but though the squire was a good-natured man, yet as he governed his family with high authority, and as they perceived something had offended him, they did not inquire the reason, nor indeed did they suspect it. Melissa packed up her things as usual: and in the morning the young gentleman and his sister having by their father's orders got into the coach, he called Melissa into the parlour; where, in a few words, but with great acrimony, he reproached her with having formed a design to marry his son without his consent, an act of ingratitude which he said justified him in upbraiding her with the favours which he had already conferred upon her, and in a resolution he had taken that a bank bill of fifty pounds, which he then put into

her hand, should be the last; adding, that he expected she should within one week leave the house. To this heavy charge she was not in a condition to reply; nor did he stay to see whether she would attempt it, but hastily got into the coach, which immediately drove from the door.

Thus was Melissa, a third time, by a sudden and unexpected desertion, exposed to penury and distress, with this aggravation, that ease and affluence were become habitual; and that though she was not so helpless as at the death of her uncle, she was exposed to yet greater danger; for few that have been used to slumber upon down, and wake to festivity, can resist the allurements of vice, who still offers ease and plenty, when the alternatives are a flock bed and a garret, short meals, coarse apparel, and perpetual labour.

Melissa, as soon as she had recovered from the stupor which had seized her upon so astonishing and dreadful a change of fortune, determined not to accept the bounty of a person who imagined her to be unworthy of it; nor to attempt her justification, while it would render her veracity suspected, and appear to proceed only from the hope of being restored to a state of splendid dependence, from which jealousy or caprice might again at any time remove her, without cause and without notice: she had not, indeed, any hope of being ever able to defend herself against her accuser upon equal terms; nor did she know how to subsist a single day, when she had returned his bill and quitted his house; yet such was the dignity of her spirit, that she immediately enclosed it in a blank cover, directed to him at his country seat, and calling up the maid who had been left to take care of the house, sent her immediately with it to the post-office. The tears then burst out, which the agitation of her mind had before restrained; and when the servant returned, she told her all that had happened, and asked her advice what she should do. The girl, after the first emotions of wonder and pity had subsided, told her that she had a sister who lodged in a reputable house, and took in plain work, to whom she would be welcome, as she could assist her in her business, of which she had often more than she could do; and with whom she might continue till some more eligible situation could be obtained. Melissa listened to this proposal as to the voice of heaven; her mind was suddenly relieved from the most tormenting perplexity, from the dread of wandering about without money or employment, exposed to the menaces of a beadle, or the insults of the rabble: she was in haste to secure her good fortune, and felt

some degree of pain lest she should lose it by the earlier application of another; she therefore went immediately with the maid to her sister, with whom it was soon agreed that Melissa should work for her board and lodging: for she would not consent to accept as a gift, that which she could by any means deserve as a payment.

While Melissa was a journeywoman to a person, who but a few weeks before would have regarded her with envy, and approached her with confusion; it happened that a suit of linen was brought from the milliner's wrapped up in a newspaper: the linen was put into the work-basket, and the paper being thrown carelessly about, Melissa, at last, catched it up and was about to read it; but perceiving that it had been published a fortnight, was just going to put it into the fire when by an accidental glance she saw her father's name: this immediately engaged her attention, and with great perturbation of mind she read an advertisement, in which her father said to have left his friends, about eighteen years before, and to have entered either into the army or the navy, was directed to apply to a person in Staples Inn, who could inform him of something greatly to his advantage. To this person Melissa applied with all the ardour of curiosity, and all the tumult of expectation: she was informed that the elder brother of the person mentioned in the advertisement was lately dead, unmarried; that he was possessed of fifteen hundred a year, five hundred of which had descended to him from his father, and one thousand had been left him by an uncle, which upon his death, there being no male heir, had been claimed by his sisters but that a mistress who had lived with him many years, and who had been treated by the supposed heiresses with too much severity and contempt, had in the bitterness of her resentment published the advertisement, having heard in the family that there was a younger brother abroad.

The conflict of different passions that were at once excited with uncommon violence in the breast of Melissa, deprived her for a time of the power of reflection; and when she became more calm, she knew not by what method to attempt the recovery of her right: her mind was bewildered amidst a thousand possibilities, and distressed by the apprehension that all might prove ineffectual. After much thought and many projects she recollected that the captain, whose servant brought her to England, could probably afford her more assistance than any other person; as he had been often pointed out to her in public

places by the 'squire, to whom her story was well known; she was acquainted with his person, and knew that within a few months he was alive: she soon obtained directions to his house, and being readily admitted to a conference, she told him with as much presence of mind as she could, that she was the person whom his compassion had contributed to preserve when an infant, in confirmation of which she produced his letter, and the certificate which it enclosed; that by the death of her father's elder brother, whose family she had never known, she was become entitled to a very considerable estate; but that she knew not what evidence would be necessary to support her claim, how such evidence was to be produced, nor with whom to intrust the management of an affair in which wealth and influence would be employed against her. The old captain received her with that easy politeness which is almost peculiar to his profession, and with a warmth of benevolence that is seldom found in any: he congratulated her upon so happy and unexpected an event; and without the parade of ostentatious liberality, without extorting an explicit confession of her indigence, he gave her a letter to his lawyer, in whom he said she might with the utmost security confide, and with whom she would have nothing more to do than to tell her story: "And do not," said he, "doubt of success, for I will be ready to testify what I know of the affair, whenever I shall be called upon; and the woman who was present at your birth, and brought you over, still lives with me, and upon this occasion may do you signal service."

Melissa departed, melted with gratitude, and elated with hope. The gentleman, to whom the captain's letter was a recommendation, prosecuted her claim with so much skill and assiduity, that within a few months she was put into the possession of her estate. Her first care was to wait upon the captain, to whom she now owed not only life but a fortune: he received her acknowledgments with a pleasure, which only those who merit it can enjoy; and insisted that she should draw upon him for such sums as she should want before her rents became due. She then took very handsome ready furnished lodgings, and determined immediately to justify her conduct to the 'squire, whose kindness she still remembered, and whose resentment she had forgiven. With this view she set out in a chariot and six, attended by two servants in livery on horseback, and proceeded to his country seat, from whence the family was not returned: she had lain at an inn within six miles of the

place, and when the chariot drove up to the door, as it was early in the morning, she could perceive the servants run to and fro in a hurry, and the young lady and her brother gazing through the window to see if they knew the livery: she remarked every circumstance which denoted her own importance with exultation; and enjoyed the solicitude which her presence produced among those, from whose society she had so lately been driven with disdain and indignation.

She now increased their wonder, by sending in a servant to acquaint the old gentleman, that a lady desired to speak with him about urgent business, which would not however long detain him; he courteously invited the lady to honour him with her commands, hasted into his best parlour, adjusted his wig, and put himself in the best order to receive her; she alighted, and displayed a very rich undress, which corresponded with the elegance of her chariot, and the modish appearance of her servants. She contrived to hide her face as she went up the walk, that she might not be known too soon; and was immediately introduced to her old friend, to whom she soon discovered herself to his great astonishment; and before he had recovered his presence of mind, she addressed him to this effect: "You see, sir, an orphan who is under the greatest obligations to your bounty, but who has been equally injured by your suspicions. When I was a dependent upon your liberality, I would not assert my innocence, because I could not bear to be suspected of falsehood: but I assert it now I am the possessor of a paternal estate, because I cannot bear to be suspected of ingratitude: that your son pressed me to marry him, is true; but it is also true that I refused him, because I would not disappoint your hopes, and impoverish your posterity." The old gentleman's confusion was increased by the wonders that crowded upon him: he first made some attempts to apologise for his suspicions with awkwardness and hesitation; then doubting the truth of appearances, he broke off abruptly and remained silent: then reproaching himself, he began to congratulate her upon her good fortune, and again desisted before he had finished the compliment. Melissa perceived his perplexity, and guessed the cause; she was, therefore, about to account more particularly for the sudden change of her circumstances, but miss, whose maid had brought her intelligence from the servants, that the lady's name who was with her papa was Melissa, and that she was lately come to a great estate by the death of her uncle, could no longer restrain the

impatience of her affection and joy; she rushed into the room and fell upon her neck, with a transport that can only be felt by friendship, and expressed by tears. When this tender silence was past, the scruples of doubt were soon obviated; the reconciliation was reciprocal and sincere; the father led out his guest, and presented her to his son, with an apology for his conduct to them both.

Melissa had bespoke a dinner and beds at the inn, but she was not suffered to return. Within a few weeks she became the daughter of her friend, who gave her hand to his son, with whom she shared many years that happiness which is the reward of virtue. They had several children, but none survived them; and Melissa, upon the death of her husband, which happened about seven years ago, retired wholly from town to her estate in the country, where she lived beloved, and died in peace.

THE DISABLED SOLDIER

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

No observation is more common, and at the same time more true, than that one half of the world are ignorant how the other half lives. The misfortunes of the great are held up to engage our attention; are enlarged upon in tones of declamation; and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers: the great, under the pressure of calamity, are conscious of several others sympathising with their distress; and have, at once, the comfort of admiration and pity.

There is nothing magnanimous in bearing misfortunes with fortitude, when the whole world is looking on: men in such circumstances will act bravely even from motives of vanity: but he who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity; who without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his misfortunes, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great: whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

While the slightest inconveniences of the great are magnified into calamities; while tragedy mouths out their sufferings in all the strains of eloquence, the miseries of the poor are entirely disregarded; and yet some of the lower ranks of people undergo

more real hardships in one day, than those of a more exalted station suffer in their whole lives. It is inconceivable what difficulties the meanest of our common sailors and soldiers endure without murmuring or regret; without passionately declaiming against providence, or calling their fellows to be gazers on their intrepidity. Every day is to them a day of misery, and yet they entertain their hard fate without repining.

With what indignation do I hear an Ovid, a Cicero, or a Rabutin complain of their misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity was that of being unable to visit a certain spot of earth, to which they had foolishly attached an idea of happiness. Their distresses were pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day endure without murmuring. They ate, drank, and slept; they had slaves to attend them, and were sure of subsistence for life; while many of their fellow creatures are obliged to wander without a friend to comfort or assist them, and even without shelter from the severity of the season.

I have been led into these reflections from accidentally meeting, some days ago, a poor fellow, whom I knew when a boy, dressed in a sailor's jacket, and begging at one of the outlets of the town, with a wooden leg. I knew him to have been honest and industrious when in the country, and was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation. Wherefore, after giving him what I thought proper, I desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, though dressed in a sailor's habit, scratching his head, and leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows:

"As for my misfortunes, master, I can't pretend to have gone through any more than other folks; for, except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don't know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to complain. There is Bill Tibbs, of our regiment, he has lost both his legs, and an eye to boot; but, thank Heaven, it is not so bad with me yet.

"I was born in Shropshire; my father was a labourer, and died when I was five years old, so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born, so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to a third. I thought in my heart, they kept sending me

about so long, that they would not let me be born in any parish at all; but at last, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and was resolved at least to know my letters: but the master of the workhouse put me to business as soon as I was able to handle a mallet; and here I lived an easy kind of life for five years. I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labour. It is true, I was not suffered to stir out of the house, for fear, as they said, I should run away; but what of that? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me. I was then bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late; but I ate and drank well; and liked my business well enough, till he died, when I was obliged to provide for myself; so I was resolved to go seek my fortune.

"In this manner I went from town to town, worked when I could get employment, and starved when I could get none; when, happening one day to go through a field belonging to a justice of peace, I spied a hare crossing the path just before me; and I believe the devil put it into my head to fling my stick at it. Well, what will you have on't? I killed the hare, and was bringing it away, when the justice himself met me; he called me a poacher and a villain, and collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself. I fell upon my knees, begged his worship's pardon, and began to give a full account of all that I knew of my breed, seed, and generation; but though I gave a very true account, the justice said I could give no account; so I was indicted at the sessions, found guilty of being poor, and sent up to London to Newgate, in order to be transported as a vagabond.

"People may say this and that of being in jail, but, for my part, I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever I was in in all my life. I had my belly full to eat and drink, and did no work at all. This kind of life was too good to last for ever; so I was taken out of prison, after five months, put on board of ship, and sent off, with two hundred more, to the plantations. We had but an indifferent passage, for being all confined in the hold, more than a hundred of our people died for want of sweet air; and those that remained were sickly enough, God knows. When we came ashore we were sold to the planters, and I was bound for seven years more. As I was no scholar, for I did not know my letters, I was obliged to work among the negroes; and I served out my time, as in duty bound to do.

"When my time was expired, I worked my passage home, and glad I was to see old England again, because I loved my country. I was afraid, however, that I should be indicted for a vagabond once more, so did not much care to go down into the country, but kept about the town, and did little jobs when I could get them.

"I was very happy in this manner for some time till one evening, coming home from work, two men knocked me down, and then desired me to stand. They belonged to a press-gang. I was carried before the justice, and as I could give no account of myself, I had my choice left, whether to go on board a man-of-war, or list for a soldier. I chose the latter, and in this post of a gentleman, I served two campaigns in Flanders, was at the battles of Val and Fontenoy, and received but one wound through the breast here; but the doctor of our regiment soon made me well again.

"When the peace came on I was discharged; and as I could not work, because my wound was sometimes troublesome, I listed for a landman in the East India Company's service. I have fought the French in six pitched battles; and I verily believe that if I could read or write, our captain would have made me a corporal. But it was not my good fortune to have any promotion, for I soon fell sick, and so got leave to return home again with forty pounds in my pocket. This was at the beginning of the present war, and I hoped to be set on shore, and to have the pleasure of spending my money; but the Government wanted men, and so I was pressed for a sailor, before ever I could set a foot on shore.

"The boatswain found me, as he said, an obstinate fellow: he swore he knew that I understood my business well, but that I shammed Abraham, to be idle; but God knows, I knew nothing of sea-business, and he beat me without considering what he was about. I had still, however, my forty pounds, and that was some comfort to me under every beating; and the money I might have had to this day, but that our ship was taken by the French, and so I lost all.

"Our crew was carried into Brest, and many of them died, because they were not used to live in a jail; but, for my part, it was nothing to me, for I was seasoned. One night, as I was asleep on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about me, for I always loved to lie well, I was awakened by the boatswain, who had a dark lantern in his hand. 'Jack,' says he to me, 'will you knock out the French sentry's brains?' 'I

don't care,' says I, striving to keep myself awake, 'if I lend a hand.' 'Then, follow me,' says he, 'and I hope we shall do business.' So up I got, and tied my blanket, which was all the clothes I had, about my middle, and went with him to fight the Frenchman. I hate the French, because they are all slaves, and wear wooden shoes.

"Though we had no arms, one Englishman is able to beat five French at any time; so we went down to the door where both the sentries were posted, and rushing upon them, seized their arms in a moment, and knocked them down. From thence nine of us ran together to the quay, and seizing the first boat we met, got out of the harbour and put to sea. We had not been here three days before we were taken up by the Dorset privateer, who were glad of so many good hands; and we consented to run our chance. However, we had not as much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with the *Pompadour* privateer of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three, so to it we went, yard-arm and yard-arm. The fight lasted three hours, and I verily believe we should have taken the Frenchman, had we but had some more men left behind; but unfortunately we lost all our men just as we were going to get the victory.

"I was once more in the power of the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me had I been brought back to Brest; but by good fortune we were retaken by the *Viper*. I had almost forgotten to tell you, that in that engagement, I was wounded in two places: I lost four fingers off the left hand, and my leg was shot off. If I had had the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king's ship, and not aboard a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life; but that was not my chance: one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God, I enjoy good health, and will for ever love liberty and old England. Liberty, property, and old England, for ever, huzza!"

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving me in admiration at his intrepidity and content; nor could I avoid acknowledging, that an habitual acquaintance with misery serves better than philosophy to teach us to despise it.

THE TAPESTRIED CHAMBER

OR

THE LADY IN THE SACQUE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE following narrative is given from the pen, so far as memory permits, in the same character in which it was presented to the author's ear; nor has he claim to further praise, or to be more deeply censured, than in proportion to the good or bad judgment which he has employed in selecting his materials, as he has studiously avoided any attempt at ornament which might interfere with the simplicity of the tale.

At the same time, it must be admitted that the particular class of stories which turns on the marvellous, possesses a stronger influence when told than when committed to print. The volume taken up at noonday, though rehearsing the same incidents, conveys a much more feeble impression than is achieved by the voice of the speaker on a circle of fireside auditors, who hang upon the narrative as the narrator details the minute incidents which serve to give it authenticity, and lowers his voice with an affectation of mystery while he approaches the fearful and wonderful part. It was with such advantages that the present writer heard the following events related, more than twenty years since, by the celebrated Miss Seward, of Litchfield, who, to her numerous accomplishments, added, in a remarkable degree, the power of narrative in private conversation. In its present form the tale must necessarily lose all the interest which was attached to it, by the flexible voice and intelligent features of the gifted narrator. Yet still, read aloud, to an undoubting audience by the doubtful light of the closing evening, or, in silence, by a decaying taper, and amidst the solitude of a half-lighted apartment, it may redeem its character as a good ghost story. Miss Seward always affirmed that she had derived her information from an authentic source, although she suppressed the names of the two persons chiefly concerned. I will not avail myself of any particulars I may have since received concerning the localities of the detail, but suffer them to rest under the same general descrip-

tion in which they were first related to me; and, for the same reason, I will not add to or diminish the narrative, by any circumstance, whether more or less material, but simply rehearse, as I heard it, a story of supernatural terror.

About the end of the American war, when the officers of Lord Cornwallis's army, which surrendered at Yorktown, and others, who had been made prisoners during the impolitic and ill-fated controversy, were returning to their own country, to relate their adventures, and repose themselves after their fatigues, there was amongst them a general officer, to whom Miss S. gave the name of Browne, but merely, as I understood, to save the inconvenience of introducing a nameless agent in the narrative. He was an officer of merit, as well as a gentleman of high consideration for family and attainments.

Some business had carried General Browne upon a tour through the western counties, when, in the conclusion of a morning stage, he found himself in the vicinity of a small country town, which presented a scene of uncommon beauty, and of a character peculiarly English.

The little town, with its stately old church, whose tower bore testimony to the devotion of ages long past, lay amidst pastures and corn-fields of small extent, but bounded and divided with hedgerow timber of great age and size. There were few marks of modern improvement. The environs of the place intimated neither the solitude of decay nor the bustle of novelty; the houses were old, but in good repair; and the beautiful little river murmured freely on its way to the left of the town, neither restrained by a dam, nor bordered by a towing-path.

Upon a gentle eminence, nearly a mile to the southward of of the town, were seen, amongst many venerable oaks and tangled thickets, the turrets of a castle, as old as the wars of York and Lancaster, but which seemed to have received important alterations during the age of Elizabeth and her successor. It had not been a place of great size; but whatever accommodation it formerly afforded was, it must be supposed, still to be obtained within its walls; at least such was the inference which General Browne drew from observing the smoke arise merrily from several of the ancient chimney-stacks. The wall of the park ran alongside of the highway for two or three hundred yards; and through the different points by which the eye found glimpses into the woodland scenery, it seemed to be well stocked. Other points of view opened in succession; now

a full one, of the front of the old castle, and now a side glimpse at its particular towers; the former rich in all the bizarrerie of the Elizabethan school, while the simple and solid strength of other parts of the building seemed to show that they had been raised more for defence than ostentation.

Delighted with the partial glimpses which he obtained of the castle through the woods and glades by which this ancient feudal fortress was surrounded, our military traveller was determined to inquire whether it might not deserve a nearer view, and whether it contained family pictures or other objects of curiosity worthy of a stranger's visit; when, leaving the vicinity of the park, he rolled through a clean and well-paved street, and stopped at the door of a well-frequented inn.

Before ordering horses to proceed on his journey, General Browne made inquiries concerning the proprietor of the château which had so attracted his admiration; and was equally surprised and pleased at hearing in reply a nobleman named, whom we shall call Lord Woodville. How fortunate! Much of Browne's early recollections, both at school and at college, had been connected with young Woodville, whom, by a few questions, he now ascertained to be the same with the owner of this fair domain. He had been raised to the peerage by the decease of his father a few months before, and, as the General learned from the landlord, the term of mourning being ended, was now taking possession of his paternal estate, in the jovial season of merry autumn, accompanied by a select party of friends to enjoy the sports of a country famous for game.

This was delightful news to our traveller. Frank Woodville had been Richard Browne's fag at Eton, and his chosen intimate at Christ Church; their pleasures and their tasks had been the same; and the honest soldier's heart warmed to find his early friend in possession of so delightful a residence, and of an estate, as the landlord assured him with a nod and a wink, fully adequate to maintain and add to his dignity. Nothing was more natural than that the traveller should suspend a journey, which there was nothing to render hurried, to pay a visit to an old friend under such agreeable circumstances.

The fresh horses, therefore, had only the brief task of conveying the General's travelling carriage to Woodville Castle. A porter admitted them at a modern Gothic lodge, built in that style to correspond with the castle itself, and at the same time rang a bell to give warning of the approach of visitors. Apparently the sound of the bell had suspended the separation

of the company, bent on the various amusements of the morning; for, on entering the court of the château, several young men were lounging about in their sporting dresses, looking at and criticising the dogs which the keepers held in readiness to attend their pastime. As General Browne alighted, the young lord came to the gate of the hall, and for an instant gazed, as at a stranger, upon the countenance of his friend, on which war, with its fatigues and its wounds, had made a great alteration. But the uncertainty lasted no longer than till the visitor had spoken, and the hearty greeting which followed was such as can only be exchanged betwixt those who have passed together the merry days of careless boyhood or early youth.

"If I could have formed a wish, my dear Browne," said Lord Woodville, "it would have been to have you here, of all men, upon this occasion, which my friends are good enough to hold as a sort of holiday. Do not think you have been unwatched during the years you have been absent from us. I have traced you through your dangers, your triumphs, your misfortunes, and was delighted to see that, whether in victory or defeat, the name of my old friend was always distinguished with applause."

The General made a suitable reply, and congratulated his friend on his new dignities, and the possession of a place and domain so beautiful.

"Nay, you have seen nothing of it as yet," said Lord Woodville, "and I trust you do not mean to leave us till you are better acquainted with it. It is true, I confess, that my present party is pretty large, and the old house, like other places of the kind, does not possess so much accommodation as the extent of the outward walls appears to promise. But we can give you a comfortable old-fashioned room, and I venture to suppose that your campaigns have taught you to be glad of worse quarters."

The General shrugged his shoulders, and laughed. "I presume," he said, "the worst apartment in your château is considerably superior to the old tobacco-cask, in which I was fain to take up my night's lodging when I was in the bush, as the Virginians call it, with the light corps. There I lay, like Diogenes himself, so delighted with my covering from the elements, that I made a vain attempt to have it rolled on to my next quarters; but my commander for the time would give way to no such luxurious provision, and I took farewell of my beloved cask with tears in my eyes."

"Well, then, since you do not fear your quarters," said Lord Woodville, "you will stay with me a week at least. Of guns, dogs, fishing-rods, flies, and means of sport by sea and land, we have enough and to spare: you cannot pitch on an amusement but we will find the means of pursuing it. But if you prefer the gun and pointers, I will go with you myself, and see whether you have mended your shooting since you have been amongst the Indians of the back settlements."

The General gladly accepted his friendly host's proposal in all its points. After a morning of manly exercise, the company met at dinner, where it was the delight of Lord Woodville to conduce to the display of the high properties of his recovered friend, so as to recommend him to his guests, most of whom were persons of distinction. He led General Browne to speak of the scenes he had witnessed; and as every word marked alike the brave officer and the sensible man, who retained possession of his cool judgment under the most imminent dangers, the company looked upon the soldier with general respect, as on one who had proved himself possessed of an uncommon portion of personal courage—that attribute, of all others, of which everybody desires to be thought possessed.

The day at Woodville Castle ended as usual in such mansions. The hospitality stopped within the limits of good order. Music, in which the young lord was a proficient, succeeded to the circulation of the bottle; cards and billiards, for those who preferred such amusements, were in readiness; but the exercise of the morning required early hours, and not long after eleven o'clock the guests began to retire to their several apartments.

The young lord himself conducted his friend, General Browne, to the chamber destined for him, which answered the description he had given of it, being comfortable, but old-fashioned. The bed was of the massive form used in the end of the seventeenth century, and the curtains of faded silk, heavily trimmed with tarnished gold. But then the sheets, pillows, and blankets looked delightful to the campaigner, when he thought of his "mansion, the cask." There was an air of gloom in the tapestry hangings, which, with their worn-out graces, curtained the walls of the little chamber, and gently undulated as the autumnal breeze found its way through the ancient lattice-window, which pattered and whistled as the air gained entrance. The toilet, too, with its mirror, turbaned, after the manner of the beginning of the century, with a coiffure of murrey-coloured silk, and its hundred strange-shaped boxes, providing for arrangements

which had been obsolete for more than fifty years, had an antique, and in so far a melancholy, aspect. But nothing could blaze more brightly and cheerfully than the two large wax candles; or if aught could rival them, it was the flaming bickering fagots in the chimney that sent at once their gleam and their warmth through the snug apartment, which, notwithstanding the general antiquity of its appearance, was not wanting in the least convenience that modern habits rendered either necessary or desirable.

"This is an old-fashioned sleeping apartment, General," said the young lord; "but I hope you find nothing that makes you envy your old tobacco-cask."

"I am not particular respecting my lodgings," replied the General; "yet were I to make any choice, I would prefer this chamber by many degrees to the gayer and more modern rooms of your family mansion. Believe me, that when I unite its modern air of comfort with its venerable antiquity, and recollect that it is your lordship's property, I shall feel in better quarters here, than if I were in the best hotel London could afford."

"I trust—I have no doubt—that you will find yourself as comfortable as I wish you, my dear General," said the young nobleman; and once more bidding his guest good-night, he shook him by the hand, and withdrew.

The General once more looked around him, and internally congratulating himself on his return to peaceful life, the comforts of which were endeared by the recollection of the hardships and dangers he had lately sustained, undressed himself, and prepared for a luxurious night's rest.

Here, contrary to the custom of this species of tale, we leave the General in possession of his apartment until the next morning.

The company assembled for breakfast at an early hour, but without the appearance of General Browne, who seemed the guest that Lord Woodville was desirous of honouring above all whom his hospitality had assembled around him. He more than once expressed himself surprised at the General's absence, and at length sent a servant to make inquiry after him. The man brought back information that General Browne had been walking abroad since an early hour of the morning, in defiance of the weather, which was misty and ungenial.

"The custom of a soldier," said the young nobleman to his friends; "many of them acquire habitual vigilance, and cannot

sleep after the early hour at which their duty usually commands them to be alert."

Yet the explanation which Lord Woodville thus offered to the company seemed hardly satisfactory to his own mind, and it was in a fit of silence and abstraction that he awaited the return of the General. It took place near an hour after the breakfast bell had rung. He looked fatigued and feverish. His hair—the powdering and arrangement of which was at this time one of the most important occupations of a man's whole day, and marked his fashion as much as, in the present time, the tying of a cravat, or the want of one—was dishevelled, uncurled, void of powder, and dank with dew. His clothes were huddled on with a careless negligence, remarkable in a military man, whose real or supposed duties are usually held to include some attention to the toilet; and his looks were haggard and ghastly in a peculiar degree.

"So you have stolen a march upon us this morning, my dear General," said Lord Woodville; "or you have not found your bed so much to your mind as I had hoped and you seemed to expect. How did you rest last night?"

"Oh, excellently well! remarkably well! never better in my life," said General Browne rapidly, and yet with an air of embarrassment which was obvious to his friend. He then hastily swallowed a cup of tea, and, neglecting or refusing whatever else was offered, seemed to fall into a fit of abstraction.

"You will take the gun to-day, General?" said his friend and host, but had to repeat the question twice ere he received the abrupt answer, "No, my lord; I am sorry I cannot have the opportunity of spending another day with your lordship: my post horses are ordered, and will be here directly."

All who were present showed surprise, and Lord Woodville immediately replied, "Post horses, my good friend! what can you possibly want with them, when you promised to stay with me quietly for at least a week?"

"I believe," said the General, obviously much embarrassed, "that I might, in the pleasure of my first meeting with your lordship, have said something about stopping here a few days; but I have since found it altogether impossible."

"This is very extraordinary," answered the young nobleman. "You seemed quite disengaged yesterday, and you cannot have had a summons to-day; for our post has not come up from the town, and therefore you cannot have received any letters."

General Browne, without giving any further explanation, muttered something about indispensable business, and insisted on the absolute necessity of his departure in a manner which silenced all opposition on the part of his host, who saw that his resolution was taken, and forbore all further importunity.

"At least, however," he said, "permit me, my dear Browne, since go you will or must, to show you the view from the terrace, which the mist, that is now rising, will soon display."

He threw open a sash window, and stepped down upon the terrace as he spoke. The General followed him mechanically, but seemed little to attend to what his host was saying, as, looking across an extended and rich prospect, he pointed out the different objects worthy of observation. Thus they moved on till Lord Woodville had attained his purpose of drawing his guest entirely apart from the rest of the company, when, turning round upon him with an air of great solemnity, he addressed him thus:

"Richard Browne, my old and very dear friend, we are now alone. Let me conjure you to answer me, upon the word of a friend, and the honour of a soldier. How did you in reality rest during last night?"

"Most wretchedly indeed, my lord," answered the General, in the same tone of solemnity; "so miserably, that I would not run the risk of such a second night, not only for all the lands belonging to this castle, but for all the country which I see from this elevated point of view."

"This is most extraordinary," said the young lord, as if speaking to himself; "then there must be something in the reports concerning that apartment." Again turning to the General, he said, "For God's sake, my dear friend, be candid with me, and let me know the disagreeable particulars which have befallen you under a roof where, with consent of the owner, you should have met nothing save comfort."

The General seemed distressed by this appeal, and paused a moment before he replied. "My dear lord," he at length said, "what happened to me last night is of a nature so peculiar and so unpleasant, that I could hardly bring myself to detail it even to your lordship, were it not that, independent of my wish to gratify any request of yours, I think that sincerity on my part may lead to some explanation about a circumstance equally painful and mysterious. To others, the communication I am about to make might place me in the light of a weak-minded, superstitious fool, who suffered his own imagination to

delude and bewilder him; but you have known me in childhood and youth, and will not suspect me of having adopted in manhood the feelings and frailties from which my early years were free." Here he paused, and his friend replied:

"Do not doubt my perfect confidence in the truth of your communication, however strange it may be," replied Lord Woodville; "I know your firmness of disposition too well to suspect you could be made the object of imposition, and am aware that your honour and your friendship will equally deter you from exaggerating whatever you may have witnessed."

"Well, then," said the General, "I will proceed with my story as well as I can, relying upon your candour, and yet distinctly feeling that I would rather face a battery than recall to my mind the odious recollections of last night."

He paused a second time, and then perceiving that Lord Woodville remained silent and in an attitude of attention, he commenced, though not without obvious reluctance, the history of his night adventures in the Tapestried Chamber.

"I undressed and went to bed so soon as your lordship left me yesterday evening; but the wood in the chimney, which nearly fronted my bed, blazed brightly and cheerfully, and, aided by a hundred exciting recollections of my childhood and youth, which had been recalled by the unexpected pleasure of meeting your lordship, prevented me from falling immediately asleep. I ought, however, to say that these reflections were all of a pleasant and agreeable kind, grounded on a sense of having for a time exchanged the labour, fatigues, and dangers of my profession, for the enjoyments of a peaceful life, and the reunion of those friendly and affectionate ties, which I had torn asunder at the rude summons of war.

"While such pleasing reflections were stealing over my mind, and gradually lulling me to slumber, I was suddenly aroused by a sound like that of the rustling of a silken gown, and the tapping of a pair of high-heeled shoes, as if a woman were walking in the apartment. Ere I could draw the curtain to see what the matter was, the figure of a little woman passed between the bed and the fire. The back of this form was turned to me, and I could observe, from the shoulders and neck, it was that of an old woman, whose dress was an old-fashioned gown, which, I think, ladies call a sacque; that is, a sort of robe completely loose in the body, but gathered into broad plaits upon the neck and shoulders, which fall down to the ground, and terminate in a species of train.

"I thought the intrusion singular enough, but never harboured for a moment the idea that what I saw was anything more than the mortal form of some old woman about the establishment, who had a fancy to dress like her grandmother, and who, having perhaps (as your lordship mentioned that you were rather straitened for room) been dislodged from her chamber for my accommodation, had forgotten the circumstance, and returned by twelve to her old haunt. Under this persuasion, I moved myself in bed and coughed a little, to make the intruder sensible of my being in possession of the premises. She turned slowly round, but, gracious Heaven, my lord, what a countenance did she display to me! There was no longer any question what she was, or any thought of her being a living being. Upon a face which wore the fixed features of a corpse were imprinted the traces of the vilest and most hideous passions which had animated her while she lived. The body of some atrocious criminal seemed to have been given up from the grave, and the soul restored from the penal fire, in order to form, for a space, an union with the ancient accomplice of its guilt. I started up in bed, and sat upright, supporting myself on my palms, as I gazed on this horrible spectre. The hag made, as it seemed, a single and swift stride to the bed where I lay, and squatted herself down upon it in precisely the same attitude which I had assumed in the extremity of horror, advancing her diabolical countenance within half a yard of mine, with a grin that seemed to intimate the malice and the derision of an incarnate fiend."

Here General Browne stopped, and wiped from his brow the cold perspiration with which the recollection of his horrible vision had covered it.

"My Lord," he said, "I am no coward. I have been in all the mortal dangers incidental to my profession, and I may truly boast, that no man ever knew Richard Browne dishonour the sword he wears; but in these horrible circumstances, under the eyes, and, as it seemed, almost in the grasp of an incarnation of an evil spirit, all firmness forsook me, all manhood melted from me like wax in the furnace, and I felt my hair individually bristle. The current of my life-blood ceased to flow, and I sank back in a swoon, as very a victim to panic terror as ever was a village girl, or a child of ten years old. How long I lay in this condition I cannot pretend to guess.

"But I was roused by the castle clock striking one, so loud that it seemed as if it were in the very room. It was some time

before I dared open my eyes, lest they should again encounter the horrible spectacle. When, however, I summoned courage to look up, she was no longer visible. My first idea was to pull my bell, wake the servants, and remove to a garret or a hay-loft, to be ensured against a second visitation. Nay, I will confess the truth, that my resolution was altered, not by the shame of exposing myself, but by the fear that, as the bell-cord hung by the chimney, I might, in making my way to it, be again crossed by the fiendish hag, who, I figured to myself, might be still lurking about some corner of the apartment.

"I will not pretend to describe what hot and cold fever-fits tormented me for the rest of the night, through broken sleep, weary vigils, and that dubious state which forms the neutral ground between them. An hundred terrible objects appeared to haunt me; but there was the great difference betwixt the vision which I have described, and those which followed, that I knew the last to be deceptions of my own fancy and over-excited nerves.

"Day at last appeared, and I rose from my bed ill in health and humiliated in mind. I was ashamed of myself as a man and a soldier, and still more so, at feeling my own extreme desire to escape from the haunted apartment, which, however, conquered all other considerations; so that, huddling on my clothes with the most careless haste, I made my escape from your lordship's mansion, to seek in the open air some relief to my nervous system, shaken as it was by this horrible encounter with a visitant, for such I must believe her, from the other world. Your lordship has now heard the cause of my discomposure, and of my sudden desire to leave your hospitable castle. In other places I trust we may often meet; but God protect me from ever spending a second night under that roof!"

Strange as the General's tale was, he spoke with such a deep air of conviction, that it cut short all the usual commentaries which are made on such stories. Lord Woodville never once asked him if he was sure he did not dream of the apparition, or suggested any of the possibilities by which it is fashionable to explain supernatural appearances, as wild vagaries of the fancy, or deceptions of the optic nerves. On the contrary, he seemed deeply impressed with the truth and reality of what he had heard; and after a considerable pause, regretted, with much appearance of sincerity, that his early friend should in his house have suffered so severely.

"I am the more sorry for your pain, my dear Browne," he continued, "that it is the unhappy, though most unexpected, result of an experiment of my own. You must know that, for my father and grandfather's time at least, the apartment which was assigned to you last night had been shut on account of reports that it was disturbed by supernatural sights and noises. When I came, a few weeks since, into possession of the estate, I thought the accommodation which the castle afforded for my friends was not extensive enough to permit the inhabitants of the invisible world to retain possession of a comfortable sleeping apartment. I therefore caused the Tapestried Chamber, as we call it, to be opened; and, without destroying its air of antiquity, I had such new articles of furniture placed in it as became the modern times. Yet as the opinion that the room was haunted very strongly prevailed among the domestics, and was also known in the neighbourhood and to many of my friends, I feared some prejudice might be entertained by the first occupant of the Tapestried Chamber, which might tend to revive the evil report which it had laboured under, and so disappoint my purpose of rendering it an useful part of the house. I must confess, my dear Browne, that your arrival yesterday, agreeable to me for a thousand reasons besides, seemed the most favourable opportunity of removing the unpleasant rumours which attached to the room, since your courage was indubitable, and your mind free of any preoccupation on the subject. I could not, therefore, have chosen a more fitting subject for my experiment."

"Upon my life," said General Browne, somewhat hastily, "I am infinitely obliged to your lordship—very particularly indebted indeed. I am likely to remember for some time the consequences of the experiment, as your lordship is pleased to call it."

"Nay, now you are unjust, my dear friend," said Lord Woodville. "You have only to reflect for a single moment, in order to be convinced that I could not augur the possibility of the pain to which you have been so unhappily exposed. I was yesterday morning a complete sceptic on the subject of supernatural appearances. Nay, I am sure that had I told you what was said about that room, those very reports would have induced you, by your own choice, to select it for your accommodation. It was my misfortune, perhaps my error, but really cannot be termed my fault, that you have been afflicted so strangely."

"Strangely indeed!" said the General, resuming his good temper; "and I acknowledge that I have no right to be offended with your lordship for treating me like what I used to think myself—a man of some firmness and courage. But I see my post horses are arrived, and I must not detain your lordship from your amusement."

"Nay, my old friend," said Lord Woodville, "since you cannot stay with us another day, which, indeed, I can no longer urge, give me at least half an hour more. You used to love pictures and I have a gallery of portraits, some of them by Vandyke, representing ancestry to whom this property and castle formerly belonged. I think that several of them will strike you as possessing merit."

General Browne accepted the invitation, though somewhat unwillingly. It was evident he was not to breathe freely or at ease till he left Woodville Castle far behind him. He could not refuse his friend's invitation, however; and the less so, that he was a little ashamed of the peevishness which he had displayed towards his well-meaning entertainer.

The General, therefore, followed Lord Woodville through several rooms, into a long gallery hung with pictures, which the latter pointed out to his guest, telling the names, and giving some account of the personages whose portraits presented themselves in progression. General Browne was but little interested in the details which these accounts conveyed to him. They were, indeed, of the kind which are usually found in an old family gallery. Here, was a cavalier who had ruined the estate in the royal cause; there, a fine lady who had reinstated it by contracting a match with a wealthy Roundhead. There, hung a gallant who had been in danger for corresponding with the exiled Court at Saint Germain's; here, one who had taken arms for William at the Revolution; and there, a third that had thrown his weight alternately into the scale of whig and tory.

While Lord Woodville was cramming these words into his guest's ear, "against the stomach of his sense," they gained the middle of the gallery, when he beheld General Browne suddenly start, and assume an attitude of the utmost surprise, not unmixed with fear, as his eyes were caught and suddenly riveted by a portrait of an old, old lady in a sacque, the fashionable dress of the end of the seventeenth century.

"There she is!" he exclaimed; "there she is, in form and features, though inferior in demoniac expression, to the accursed hag who visited me last night!"

"If that be the case," said the young nobleman, "there can remain no longer any doubt of the horrible reality of your apparition. That is the picture of a wretched ancestress of mine, of whose crimes a black and fearful catalogue is recorded in a family history in my charter-chest. The recital of them would be too horrible; it is enough to say, that in yon fatal apartment incest and unnatural murder were committed. I will restore it to the solitude to which the better judgment of those who preceded me had consigned it; and never shall any one, so long as I can prevent it, be exposed to a repetition of the supernatural horrors which could shake such courage as yours."

Thus the friends, who had met with such glee, parted in a very different mood; Lord Woodville to command the Tapestried Chamber to be unmantled, and the door built up; and General Browne to seek in some less beautiful country, and with some less dignified friend, forgetfulness of the painful night which he had passed in Woodville Castle.

THE HAUNTED SHIPS

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

Though my mind's not
Hoodwink'd with rustic marvels, I do think
There are more things in the grove, the air, the flood,
Yea, and the charnell'd earth, than that wise man,
Who walks so proud as if his form alone
Fill'd the wide temple of the universe,
Will let a frail mind say. I'd write i' the creed
O' the sagest head alive, that fearful forms,
Holy and reprobate, do page men's heels;
That shapes, too horrid for our gaze, stand o'er
The murderer's dust, and for revenge glare up,
Even till the stars weep fire for very pity.

ALONG the sea of Solway, romantic on the Scottish side, with its woodland, its bays, its cliffs, and headlands,—and interesting on the English side, with its many beautiful towns with their shadows on the water, rich pastures, safe harbours, and numerous ships,—there still linger many traditional stories of a maritime nature, most of them connected with superstitions singularly wild and unusual. To the curious these tales afford a rich fund of entertainment, from the many diversities of the same story;

some dry and barren, and stripped of all the embellishments of poetry; others dressed out in all the riches of a superstitious belief and haunted imagination. In this they resemble the inland traditions of the peasants; but many of the oral treasures of the Galwegian or the Cumbrian coast have the stamp of the Dane and the Norseman upon them, and claim but a remote or faint affinity with the legitimate legends of Caledonia. Something like a rude prosaic outline of several of the most noted of the northern ballads, the adventures and depredations of the old ocean kings, still lends life to the evening tale; and, among others, the story of the Haunted Ships is still popular among the maritime peasantry.

One fine harvest evening, I went on board the shallop of Richard Faulder, of Allanbay; and, committing ourselves to the waters, we allowed a gentle wind from the east to waft us at its pleasure towards the Scottish coast. We passed the sharp promontory of Siddick; and skirting the land within a stone-cast, glided along the shore till we came within sight of the ruined Abbey of Sweetheart. The green mountain of Criffell ascended beside us; and the bleat of the flocks from its summit, together with the winding of the evening horn of the reapers, came softened into something like music over land and sea. We pushed our shallop into a deep and wooded bay, and sat silently looking on the serene beauty of the place. The moon glimmered in her rising through the tall shafts of the pines of Caerlaverock; and the sky, with scarce a cloud, showered down on wood, and headland, and bay, the twinkling beams of a thousand stars rendering every object visible. The tide, too, was coming with that swift and silent swell observable when the wind is gentle; the woody curves along the land were filling with the flood, till it touched the green branches of the drooping trees; while in the centre current the roll and the plunge of a thousand pellocks told to the experienced fisherman that salmon were abundant.

As we looked, we saw an old man emerging from a path that winded to the shore through a grove of doddered hazel; he carried a half-net on his back, while behind him came a girl, bearing a small harpoon with which the fishers are remarkably dexterous in striking their prey. The senior seated himself on a large grey stone, which overlooked the bay, laid aside his bonnet, and submitted his bosom and neck to the refreshing sea breeze; and taking his harpoon from his attendant, sat with the gravity and composure of a spirit of the flood, with

his ministering nymph behind him. We pushed our shallop to the shore, and soon stood at their side.

"This is old Mark Macmoran, the mariner, with his grand-daughter Barbara," said Richard Faulder, in a whisper that had something of fear in it; "he knows every creek, and cavern, and quicksand, in Solway; has seen the Spectre Hound that haunts the Isle of Man; has heard him bark, and at every bark has seen a ship sink; and he has seen, too, the Haunted Ships in full sail; and, if all tales be true, he has sailed in them himself; he's an awful person."

Though I perceived in the communication of my friend something of the superstition of the sailor, I could not help thinking that common rumour had made a happy choice in singling out old Mark to maintain her intercourse with the invisible world. His hair, which seemed to have refused all intercourse with the comb, hung matted upon his shoulders; a kind of mantle, or rather blanket, pinned with a wooden skewer round his neck, fell mid-leg down, concealing all his nether garments as far as a pair of hose, darned with yarn of all conceivable colours, and a pair of shoes, patched and repaired till nothing of the original structure remained, and clasped on his feet with two massy silver buckles. If the dress of the old man was rude and sordid, that of his grand-daughter was gay, and even rich. She wore a bodice of fine wool, wrought round the bosom with alternate leaf and lily, and a kirtle of the same fabric, which, almost touching her white and delicate ankle, showed her snowy feet, so fairy-light that they scarcely seemed to touch the grass where she stood. Her hair, a natural ornament which woman seeks much to improve, was of bright glossy brown, and encumbered rather than adorned with a snood, set thick with marine productions, among which the small clear pearl found in the Solway was conspicuous. Nature had not trusted to a handsome shape, and a sylph-like air, for young Barbara's influence over the heart of man; but had bestowed a pair of large bright blue eyes, swimming in liquid light, so full of love, and gentleness, and joy, that all the sailors from Annan Water to far Saint Bees acknowledged their power, and sung songs about the bonnie lass of Mark Macmoran. She stood holding a small gaff-hook of polished steel in her hand, and seemed not dissatisfied with the glances I bestowed on her from time to time, and which I held more than requited by a single glance of those eyes which retained so many capricious hearts in subjection.

The tide, though rapidly augmenting, had not yet filled the bay at our feet. The moon now streamed fairly over the tops of Caerlaverock pines, and showed the expanse of ocean dimpling and swelling, on which sloops and shallops came dancing, and displaying at every turn their extent of white sail against the beam of the moon. I looked on old Mark the Mariner, who, seated motionless on his grey stone, kept his eye fixed on the increasing waters with a look of seriousness and sorrow in which I saw little of the calculating spirit of a mere fisherman. Though he looked on the coming tide, his eyes seemed to dwell particularly on the black and decayed hulls of two vessels, which, half immersed in the quicksand, still addressed to every heart a tale of shipwreck and desolation. The tide wheeled and foamed around them; and creeping inch by inch up the side, at last fairly threw its waters over the top, and a long and hollow eddy showed the resistance which the liquid element received.

The moment they were fairly buried in the water, the old man clasped his hands together, and said, "Blessed be the tide that will break over and bury ye for ever! Sad to mariners, and sorrowful to maids and mothers, has the time been ye have choked up this deep and bonnie bay. For evil were you sent, and for evil have you continued. Every season finds from you its song of sorrow and wail, its funeral processions, and its shrouded corses. Woe to the land where the wood grew that made ye! Cursed by the axe that hewed ye on the mountains, the hands that joined ye together, the bay that ye first swam in, and the wind that wafted ye here! Seven times have ye put my life in peril, three fair sons have ye swept from my side, and two bonnie grand-bairns; and now, even now, your waters foam and flash for my destruction, did I venture my infirm limbs in quest of food in your deadly bay. I see by that ripple and that foam, and hear by the sound and singing of your surge, that ye yearn for another victim; but it shall not be me nor mine."

Even as the old mariner addressed himself to the wrecked ships, a young man appeared at the southern extremity of the bay, holding his half-net in his hand, and hastening into the current. Mark rose, and shouted, and waved him back from a place which, to a person unacquainted with the dangers of the bay, real and superstitious, seemed sufficiently perilous: his grand-daughter, too, added her voice to his, and waved her white hands; but the more they strove, the faster advanced

the peasant, till he stood to his middle in the water, while the tide increased every moment in depth and strength. "Andrew, Andrew," cried the young woman, in a voice quavering with emotion, "turn, turn, I tell you: oh, the Ships, the Haunted Ships!" But the appearance of a fine run of fish had more influence with the peasant than the voice of bonnie Barbara, and forward he dashed, net in hand. In a moment he was borne off his feet, and mingled like foam with the water, and hurried towards the fatal eddies which whirled and roared round the sunken ships. But he was a powerful young man, and an expert swimmer; he seized on one of the projecting ribs of the nearest hulk, and clinging to it with the grasp of despair, uttered yell after yell, sustaining himself against the prodigious rush of the current.

From a shealing of turf and straw, within the pitch of a bar from the spot where we stood, came out an old woman bent with age, and leaning on a crutch. "I heard the voice of that lad Andrew Lammie; can the chield be drowning, that he skirls sae uncannilie?" said the old woman, seating herself on the ground, and looking earnestly at the water. "Ou ay," she continued, "he's doomed, he's doomed; heart and hand can never save him; boats, ropes, and man's strength and wit, all vain! vain! he's doomed, he's doomed!"

By this time I had thrown myself into the shallop, followed reluctantly by Richard Faulder, over whose courage and kindness of heart superstition had great power; and with one push from the shore, and some exertion in sculling, we came within a quoit-cast of the unfortunate fisherman. He stayed not to profit by our aid; for when he perceived us near, he uttered a piercing shriek of joy, and bounded towards us through the agitated element the full length of an oar. I saw him for a second on the surface of the water; but the eddying current sucked him down; and all I ever beheld of him again was his hand held above the flood, and clutching in agony at some imaginary aid. I sat gazing in horror on the vacant sea before us: but a breathing time before, a human being, full of youth, and strength, and hope, was there; his cries were still ringing in my ears, and echoing in the woods; and now nothing was seen or heard save the turbulent expanse of water, and the sound of its chafing on the shores. We pushed back our shallop, and resumed our station on the cliff beside the old mariner and his descendant.

"Wherefore sought ye to peril your own lives fruitlessly?"

said Mark, " in attempting to save the doomed. Whoso touches those infernal ships, never survives to tell the tale. Woe to the man who is found nigh them at midnight when the tide has subsided, and they arise in their former beauty, with forecastle, and deck, and sail, and pennon, and shroud! Then is seen the streaming of lights along the water from their cabin windows, and then is heard the sound of mirth and the clamour of tongues, and the infernal whoop and halloo, and song, ringing far and wide. Woe to the man who comes nigh them!"

To all this my Allanbay companion listened with a breathless attention. I felt something touched with a superstition to which I partly believed I had seen one victim offered up; and I inquired of the old mariner, " How and when came these haunted ships there? To me they seem but the melancholy relics of some unhappy voyagers, and much more likely to warn people to shun destruction, than entice and delude them to it."

" And so," said the old man with a smile, which had more of sorrow in it than of mirth; " and so, young man, these black and shattered hulks seem to the eye of the multitude. But things are not what they seem; that water, a kind and convenient servant to the wants of man, which seems so smooth, and so dimpling, and so gentle, has swallowed up a human soul even now; and the place which it covers, so fair and so level, is a faithless quicksand, out of which none escape. Things are otherwise than they seem. Had you lived as long as I have had the sorrow to live; had you seen the storms, and braved the perils, and endured the distresses which have befallen me; had you sat gazing out on the dreary ocean at midnight on a haunted coast; had you seen comrade after comrade, brother after brother, and son after son, swept away by the merciless ocean from your very side; had you seen the shapes of friends, doomed to the wave and the quicksand, appearing to you in the dreams and visions of the night,—then would your mind have been prepared for crediting the maritime legends of mariners; and the two haunted Danish ships would have had their terrors for you, as they have for all who sojourn on this coast.

" Of the time and the cause of their destruction," continued the old man, " I know nothing certain: they have stood as you have seen them for uncounted time; and while all other ships wrecked on this unhappy coast have gone to pieces, and rotted, and sunk away in a few years, these two haunted hulks have

ne'cher sunk in the quicksand, nor has a single spar or board been displaced. Maritime legend says, that two ships of Denmark having had permission, for a time, to work deeds of darkness and dolour on the deep, were at last condemned to the whirlpool and the sunken rock, and were wrecked in this bonnie bay, as a sign to seamen to be gentle and devout. The night when they were lost was a harvest evening of uncommon mildness and beauty; the sun had newly set; the moon came brighter and brighter out; and the reapers, laying their sickles at the root of the standing corn, stood on rock and bank, looking at the increasing magnitude of the waters, for sea and land were visible from Saint Bees to Barnhourie. The sails of two vessels were soon seen bent for the Scottish coast; and with a speed outrunning the swiftest ship, they approached the dangerous quicksands and headland of Borran Point. On the deck of the foremost ship not a living soul was seen, or shape, unless something in darkness and form resembling a human shadow could be called a shape, which flitted from extremity to extremity of the ship, with the appearance of trimming the sails, and directing the vessel's course. But the decks of its companion were crowded with human shapes; the captain, and mate, and sailor, and cabin boy, all seemed there; and from them the sound of mirth and minstrelsy echoed over land and water. The coast which they skirted along was one of extreme danger; and the reapers shouted to warn them to beware of sandbank and rock; but of this friendly counsel no notice was taken, except that a large and famished dog, which sat on the prow, answered every shout with a long, loud, and melancholy howl. The deep sand-bank of Carsethorn was expected to arrest the career of these desperate navigators; but they passed, with the celerity of waterfowl, over an obstruction which had wrecked many pretty ships.

"Old men shook their heads and departed, saying, 'We have seen the fiend sailing in a bottomless ship—let us go home and pray'; but one young and wilful man said, 'Fiend! I'll warrant it's nae fiend, but douce Janet Withershins, the witch, holding a carouse with some of her Cumberland cummers, and mickle red wine will be spilt atween them. Dod, I would gladly have a toothfu'! I'll warrant it's nane o' your cauld sour slae-water like a bottle of Bailie Skrinkie's port, but right drap-o'-my-heart's-blood stuff, that would waken a body out of their last linen. I wonder where the cummers will anchor their craft?' 'And I'll vow,' said another rustic, 'the wine they quaff is

none of your visionary drink, such as a drouthie body has dished out to his lips in a dream; nor is it shadowy and unsubstantial, like the vessels they sail in, which are made out of a cockle-shell or a cast-off slipper, or the paring of a seaman's right thumbnail. I once got a hansel out of a witch's quaigh myself, —auld Marion Mathers, of Dustiefoot, whom they tried to bury in the old kirk-yard of Dunscore; but the cummer raise as fast as they laid her down, and nae where else would she lie but in the bonnie green kirk-yard of Kier, among douce and sponsible fowk. So I'll vow that the wine of a witch's cup is as fell liquor as ever did a kindly turn to a poor man's heart; and be they fiends, or be they witches, if they have red wine asteer, I'll risk a drouket sark for ae glorious tout on't.' 'Silence, ye sinners,' said the minister's son of a neighbouring parish, who united in his own person his father's lack of devotion with his mother's love of liquor. 'Whisht!—speak as if ye had the fear of something holy before ye. Let the vessels run their own way to destruction; who can stay the eastern wind, and the current of the Solway sea? I can find ye Scripture warrant for that; so let them try their strength on Blawhooly rocks, and their might on the broad quicksand. There's a surf running there would knock the ribs together of a galley built by the imps of the pit, and commanded by the Prince of Darkness. Bonnilie and bravely they sail away there; but before the blast blows by they'll be wrecked; and red wine and strong brandy will be as rife as dyke-water, and we'll drink the health of bonnie Bell Blackness out of her left-foot slipper.'

"The speech of the young profligate was applauded by several of his companions, and away they flew to the bay of Blawhooly, from whence they never returned. The two vessels were observed all at once to stop in the bosom of the bay, on the spot where their hulls now appear; the mirth and the minstrelsy waxed louder than ever; and the forms of maidens, with instruments of music and wine-cups in their hands, thronged the decks. A boat was lowered; and the same shadowy pilot who conducted the ships made it start towards the shore with the rapidity of lightning, and its head knocked against the bank where the four young men stood, who longed for the unblest drink. They leaped in with a laugh, and with a laugh were they welcomed on deck; wine cups were given to each, and as they raised them to their lips the vessels melted away beneath their feet; and one loud shriek, mingled with laughter still louder, was heard over land and water for many miles.

Nothing more was heard or seen till the morning, when the crowd who came to the beach saw with fear and wonder the two Haunted Ships, such as they now seem, masts and tackle gone; nor mark, nor sign, by which their name, country, or destination could be known, was left remaining. Such is the tradition of the mariners; and its truth has been attested by many families whose sons and whose fathers have been drowned in the haunted bay of Blawhooly."

"And trow ye," said the old woman, who, attracted from her hut by the drowning cries of the young fisherman, had remained an auditor of the mariner's legend,—"and trow ye, Mark Macmoran, that the tale of the Haunted Ships is done? I can say no to that. Mickle have mine ears heard; but more mine eyes have witnessed since I came to dwell in this humble home by the side of the deep sea. I mind the night weel; it was on Hallowmas-eve; the nuts were cracked, and the apples were eaten, and spell and charm were tried at my fireside; till, wearied with diving into the dark waves of futurity, the lads and lasses fairly took to the more visible blessings of kind words, tender clasps, and gentle courtship. Soft words in a maiden's ear, and a kindlie kiss o' her lip, were old-world matters to me, Mark Macmoran; though I mean not to say that I have been free of the folly of daunering and daffin with a youth in my day, and keeping tryst with him in dark and lonely places. However, as I say, these times of enjoyment were passed and gone with me,—the mair's the pity that pleasure should fly sae fast away; and as I could nae make sport I thought I should not mar any, so out I sauntered into the fresh cold air, and sat down behind that old oak, and looked abroad on the wide sea. I had my ain sad thoughts, ye may think, at the time: it was in that very bay my blithe gudeman perished, with seven more in his company; and on that very bank where ye see the waves leaping and foaming, I saw seven stately corses streeked, but the dearest was the eighth. It was a woeful sight to me, a widow, with four bonnie boys, with nought to support them but these twa hands, and God's blessing, and a cow's grass. I have never liked to live out of sight of this bay since that time; and mony's the moonlight night I sit looking on these watery mountains, and these waste shores; it does my heart good, whatever it may do to my head. So ye see it was Hallowmas night; and looking on sea and land sat I; and my heart wandering to other thoughts soon made me forget my youthful company at hame. It might be near the howe hour of the

night; the tide was making, and its singing brought strange old-world stories with it; and I thought on the dangers that sailors endure, the fates they meet with, and the fearful forms they see. My own blithe gudeman had seen sights that made him grave enough at times, though he aye tried to laugh them away.

"Aweel, atween that very rock aneath us and the coming tide, I saw, or thought I saw, for the tale is so dream-like, that the whole might pass for a vision of the night,—I saw the form of a man; his plaid was grey; his face was grey; and his hair, which hung low down till it nearly came to the middle of his back, was as white as the white sea-foam. He began to howk and dig under the bank; an' God be near me, thought I, this maun be the unblessed spirit of auld Adam Gowdgowpin, the miser, who is doomed to dig for shipwrecked treasure, and count how many millions are hidden for ever from man's enjoyment. The Form found something which in shape and hue seemed a left-foot slipper of brass; so down to the tide he marched, and placing it on the water, whirled it thrice round; and the infernal slipper dilated at every turn, till it became a bonnie baye with its sails bent, and on board leaped the form, and scudded swiftly away. He came to one of the Haunted Ships; and striking it with his oar, a fair ship, with mast, and canvas, and mariners, started up; he touched the other Haunted Ship, and produced the like transformation; and away the three spectre ships bounded, leaving a track of fire behind them on the billows which was long unextinguished. Now was nae that a bonnie and a fearful sight to see beneath the light of the Hallowmas moon? But the tale is far frae finished; for mariners say that once a year, on a certain night, if ye stand on the Borran Point, ye will see the infernal shallops coming snoring through the Solway; ye will hear the same laugh, and song, and mirth, and minstrelsy, which our ancestors heard; see them bound over the sand-banks and sunken rocks like sea-gulls, cast their anchor in Blawhooly Bay, while the shadowy figure lowers down the boat, and augments their numbers with the four unhappy mortals to whose memory a stone stands in the kirkyard, with a sinking ship and a shoreless sea cut upon it. Then the spectre ships vanish, and the drowning shriek of mortals, and the rejoicing laugh of fiends are heard; and the old hulks are left as a memorial that the old spiritual kingdom has not departed from the earth. But I maun away, and trim my little cottage fire, and make it burn and blaze up bonnie,

to warm the crickets, and my cold and crazy bones, that maun soon be laid aneath the green sod in the eerie kirkyard." And away the old dame tottered to her cottage, secured the door on the inside, and soon the hearth-flame was seen to glimmer and gleam through the key-hole and window.

"I'll tell ye what," said the old mariner, in a subdued tone, and with a shrewd and suspicious glance of his eye after the old sibyl, "it's a word that may not very well be uttered, but there are many mistakes made in evening stories if old Moll Moray there, where she lives, knows not mickle more than she is willing to tell of the Haunted Ships, and their unhallowed mariners. She lives cannilie and quietly; no one knows how she is fed or supported; but her dress is aye whole, her cottage ever smokes, and her table lacks neither of wine, white and red, nor of fowl and fish, and white bread and brown. It was a dear scoff to Jock Matheson when he called old Moll the uncannie carline of Blawhooly: his boat ran round and round in the centre of the Solway,—everybody said it was enchanted,—and down it went head foremost; and had nae Jock been a swimmer equal to a sheldrake, he would have fed the fish,—but I'll warrant it sobered the lad's speech; and he never reckoned himself safe till he made auld Moll the present of a new kirtle and a stone of cheese."

"O father," said his grand-daughter Barbara, "ye surely wrong poor old Mary Moray. What use could it be to an old woman like her, who has no wrongs to redress, no malice to work out against mankind, and nothing to seek of enjoyment save a cannie hour and a quiet grave,—what use could the fellowship of fiends, and the communion of evil spirits, be to her? I know Jenny Primrose puts rowan-tree above the door-head when she sees old Mary coming; I know the good wife of Kittlenaket wears rowan-berry leaves in the headband of her blue kirtle, and all for the sake of averting the unsonsie glance of Mary's right ee; and I know that the auld laird of Burntrout-water drives his seven cows to their pasture with a wand of witch-tree, to keep Mary from milking them. But what has all that to do with haunted shallops, visionary mariners, and bottomless boats? I have heard myself as pleasant a tale about the Haunted Ships and their unworldly crews, as any one would wish to hear in a winter evening. It was told me by young Benjie Macharg, one summer night, sitting on Arbigland Bank. The lad intended a sort of love meeting; but all that he could talk of was about smearing sheep and shearing sheep,

and of the wife which the Norway elves of the Haunted Ships made for his uncle Sandie Marcharg. And I shall tell ye the tale as the honest lad told it to me.

"Alexander Macharg, besides being the laird of three acres of peatmoss, two kale gardens, and the owner of seven good milch cows, a pair of horses, and six pet sheep, was the husband of one of the handsomest women in seven parishes. Many a lad sighed the day he was brided; and a Nithsdale laird and two Annandale moorland farmers drank themselves to their last linen, as well as their last shilling, through sorrow for her loss. But married was the dame; and home she was carried, to bear rule over her home and her husband, as an honest woman should. Now ye maun ken that, though the flesh-and-blood lovers of Alexander's bonnie wife all ceased to love and to sue her after she became another's, there were certain admirers who did not consider their claim at all abated, or their hopes lessened by the kirk's famous obstacle of matrimony. Ye have heard how the devout minister of Tinwald had a fair son carried away, and bedded against his liking to an unchristened bride, whom the elves and the fairies provided; ye have heard how the bonnie bride of the drunken laird of Soukitup was stolen by the fairies out at the back window of the bridal chamber, the time the bridegroom was groping his way to the chamber door; and ye have heard—but why need I multiply cases? such things in the ancient days were as common as candle-light. So ye'll no hinder certain water elves and sea fairies, who sometimes keep festival and summer mirth in these old haunted hulks, from falling in love with the weel-faured wife of Laird Macharg; and to their plots and contrivances they went how they might accomplish to sunder man and wife; and sundering such a man and such a wife was like sundering the green leaf from the summer, or the fragrance from the flower.

"So it fell on a time that Laird Macharg took his half-net on his back, and his steel spear in his hand, and down to Blawhooly Bay gaed he, and into the water he went right between the two haunted hulks, and, placing his net, awaited the coming of the tide. The night, ye maun ken, was mirk, and the wind lowne, and the singing of the increasing waters among the shells and the peebles was heard for sundry miles. All at once lights began to glance and twinkle on board the two Haunted Ships from every hole and seam, and presently the sound as of a hatchet employed in squaring timber echoed far and wide. But if the toil of these unearthly workmen amazed the Laird,

how much more was his amazement increased when a sharp shrill voice called out, 'Ho! brother, what are you doing now?' A voice still shriller responded from the other haunted ship, 'I'm making a wife to Sandie Macharg!' and a loud quavering laugh, running from ship to ship, and from bank to bank, told the joy they expected from their labour.

"Now the Laird, besides being a devout and a God-fearing man, was shrewd and bold; and in plot, and contrivance, and skill in conducting his designs, was fairly an overmatch for any dozen land elves. But the water elves are far more subtle; besides, their haunts and their dwellings being in the great deep, pursuit and detection is hopeless if they succeed in carrying their prey to the waves. But ye shall hear. Home flew the laird,—collected his family around the hearth,—spoke of the signs and the sins of the times, and talked of mortification and prayer for averting calamity; and finally, taking his father's Bible, brass clasps, black print, and covered with calf-skin, from the shelf, he proceeded without let or stint to perform domestic worship. I should have told ye that he bolted and locked the door, shut up all inlet to the house, threw salt into the fire, and proceeded in every way like a man skilful in guarding against the plots of fairies and fiends. His wife looked on all this with wonder; but she saw something in her husband's looks that hindered her from intruding either question or advice, and a wise woman was she.

"Near the mid hour of the night the rush of a horse's feet was heard, and the sound of a rider leaping from its back, and a heavy knock came to the door, accompanied by a voice, saying, 'The cummer drink's hot, and the knave bairn is expected at Laird Laurie's to-night; sae mount, gudewife, and come.'

"'Preserve me!' said the wife of Sandie Macharg; 'that's news indeed! who could have thought it? the Laird has been heirless for seventeen years! Now Sandie, my man, fetch me my skirt and hood.'

"But he laid his arm round his wife's neck, and said, 'If all the lairds in Galloway go heirless, over this door threshold shall you not stir to-night; and I have said, and I have sworn it: seek not to know why or wherefore—but, Lord, send us thy blessed mornlight.' The wife looked for a moment in her husband's eyes, and desisted from further entreaty.

"'But let us send a civil message to the gossips, Sandy; and had nae ye better say I am sair laid with a sudden sickness?

though it's sinful-like to send the poor messenger a mile agate with a lie in his mouth without a glass of brandy.'

"' To such a messenger, and to those who sent him, no apology is needed,' said the austere Laird, ' so let him depart.' And the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and the muttered imprecations of its rider on the churlish treatment he had experienced.

"' Now Sandie, my lad,' said his wife, laying an arm particularly white and round about his neck as she spoke, ' are you not a queer man and a stern? I have been your wedded wife now these three years; and, beside my dower, have brought you three as bonnie bairns as ever smiled aneath a summer sun. O man, you a douce man, and fitter to be an elder than even Willie Greer himself,—I have the minister's ain word for't,—to put on these hard-hearted looks, and gang waving your arms that way, as if ye said, "I winna take the counsel of sic a hempie as you." I'm your ain leal wife, and will and maun have an explanation.'

" To all this Sandie Macharg replied, ' It is written—" Wives, obey your husbands "; but we have been stayed in our devotion, so let us pray '; and down he knelt. His wife knelt also, for she was as devout as bonnie; and beside them knelt their household, and all lights were extinguished.

"' Now this beats a',' muttered his wife to herself; ' however, I shall be obedient for a time; but if I dinna ken what all this is for before the morn by sunket-time, my tongue is nae langer a tongue, nor my hands worth wearing.'

" The voice of her husband in prayer interrupted this mental soliloquy; and ardently did he beseech to be preserved from the wiles of the fiends, and the snares of Satan; ' from witches, ghosts, goblins, elves, fairies, spunkies, and water-kelpies; from the spectre shallop of Solway; from spirits visible and invisible; from the Haunted Ships and their unearthly tenants; from maritime spirits that plotted against godly men, and fell in love with their wives——'

"' Nay, but His presence be near us!' said his wife in a low tone of dismay. ' God guide my gudeman's wits: I never heard such a prayer from human lips before. But Sandie, my man, Lord's sake, rise: what fearful light is this?—barn, and byre, and stable, maun be in a blaze; and Hawkie and Hurley,—Doddie, and Cherrie, and Damson Plum, will be smoored with reek, and scorched with flame.'

"And a flood of light, but not so gross as a common fire,

which ascended to heaven and filled all the court before the house, amply justified the good wife's suspicions. But to the terrors of fire, Sandie was as immovable as he was to the imaginary groans of the barren wife of Laird Laurie; and he held his wife, and threatened the weight of his right hand—and it was a heavy one—to all who ventured abroad, or even unbolted the door. The neighing and prancing of horses, and the bellowing of cows, augmented the horrors of the night; and to any one who only heard the din, it seemed that the whole onstead was in a blaze, and horses and cattle perishing in the flame. All wiles, common or extraordinary, were put in practice to entice or force the honest farmer and his wife to open the door; and when the like success attended every new stratagem, silence for a little while ensued, and a long, loud, and shrilling laugh wound up the dramatic efforts of the night. In the morning, when Laird Macharg went to the door, he found standing against one of the pilasters a piece of black ship oak, rudely fashioned into something like human form, and which skilful people declared would have been clothed with seeming flesh and blood, and palmed upon him by elfin adroitness for his wife, had he admitted his visitants. A synod of wise men and women sat upon the woman of timber, and she was finally ordered to be devoured by fire, and that in the open air. A fire was soon made, and into it the elfin sculpture was tossed from the prongs of two pairs of pitchforks. The blaze that arose was awful to behold; and hissings, and burstings, and loud cracklings, and strange noises, were heard in the midst of the flame; and when the whole sank into ashes, a drinking cup of some precious metal was found; and this cup, fashioned no doubt by elfin skill, but rendered harmless by the purification with fire, the sons and daughters of Sandie Macharg and his wife drink out of to this very day. Bless all bold men, say I, and obedient wives!"

SAVANNAH-LA-MAR

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

God smote Savannah-la-mar, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of ocean. And God said,—"Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries: this city I will bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of my mysterious anger, set in azure light through generations to come; for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of my tropic seas." This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucid atmosphere of water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates, and number the spires of her churches. She is one ample cemetery, and *has* been for many a year; but, in the mighty calms that brood for weeks over tropic latitudes, she fascinates the eye with a *Fata-Morgana* revelation, as of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air.

Thither, lured by the loveliness of cerulean depths, by the peace of human dwellings privileged from molestation, by the gleam of marble altars sleeping in everlasting sanctity, oftentimes in dreams did I and the Dark Interpreter cleave the watery veil that divided us from her streets. We looked into the belfries, where the pendulous bells were waiting in vain for the summons which should awaken their marriage peals; together we touched the mighty organ-keys, that sang no *jubilates* for the ear of heaven, that sang no requiems for the ear of human sorrow; together we searched the silent nurseries, where the children were all asleep, and *had* been asleep through five generations. "They are waiting for the heavenly dawn," whispered the Interpreter to himself: "and, when *that* comes, the bells and the organs will utter a *jubilate* repeated by the echoes of Paradise." Then, turning to me, he said,—"This

is sad, this is piteous; but less would not have sufficed for the purpose of God. Look here. Put into a Roman clepsydra one hundred drops of water; let these run out as the sands in an hour-glass, every drop measuring the hundredth part of a second, so that each shall represent but the three-hundred-and-sixty-thousandth part of an hour. Now, count the drops as they race along; and, when the fiftieth of the hundred is passing, behold! forty-nine are not, because already they have perished, and fifty are not, because they are yet to come. You see, therefore, how narrow, how incalculably narrow, is the true and actual present. Of that time which we call the present, hardly a hundredth part but belongs either to a past which has fled, or to a future which is still on the wing. It has perished, or it is not born. It was, or it is not. Yet even this approximation to the truth is *infinitely* false. For again subdivide that solitary drop, which only was found to represent the present, into a lower series of similar fractions, and the actual present which you arrest measures now but the thirty-sixth-millionth of an hour; and so by infinite declensions the true and very present, in which only we live and enjoy, will vanish into a mote of a mote, distinguishable only by a heavenly vision. Therefore the present, which only man possesses, offers less capacity for his footing than the slenderest film that ever spider twisted from her womb. Therefore, also, even this incalculable shadow from the narrowest pencil of moonlight is more transitory than geometry can measure, or thought of angel can overtake. The time which *is* contracts into a mathematic point; and even that point perishes a thousand times before we can utter its birth. All is finite in the present; and even that finite is infinite in its velocity of flight towards death. But in God there is nothing finite; but in God there is nothing transitory; but in God there *can* be nothing that tends to death. Therefore it follows that for God there can be no present. The future is the present of God, and to the future it is that he sacrifices the human present. Therefore it is that he works by earthquake. Therefore it is that he works by grief. O, deep is the ploughing of earthquake! O, deep "—(and his voice swelled like a *sanctus* rising from the choir of a cathedral)—" O, deep is the ploughing of grief! But oftentimes less would not suffice for the agriculture of God. Upon a night of earthquake he builds a thousand years of pleasant habitations for man. Upon the sorrow of an infant he raises oftentimes from human intellects glorious vintages that could not else have been. Less than these fierce plough-

shares would not have stirred the stubborn soil. The one is needed for earth, our planet,—for earth itself as the dwelling place of man; but the other is needed yet oftener for God's mightiest instrument,—yes" (and he looked solemnly at myself), "is needed for the mysterious children of the earth!"

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, "Behold what is greater than yourselves!" This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *ēdūco*, with the penultimate short, was derived

(by a process often exemplified in the crystallisation of languages) from the word *ĕdŭco*, with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes*, or develops, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant,—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children,—resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering [1] for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader, think that children generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*, —the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this world, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen; consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart; therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number: as the *Graces* are three,

[1] As I have never allowed myself to covet any man's ox nor his ass, nor anything that is his, still less would it become a philosopher to covet other people's images or metaphors. Here, therefore, I restore to Mr. Wordsworth this fine image of the revolving wheel and the glimmering spokes, as applied by him to the flying successions of day and night. I borrowed it for one moment in order to point my own sentence; which being done, the reader is witness that I now pay it back instantly by a note made for that sole purpose. On the same principle I often borrow their seals from young ladies, when closing my letters, because there is sure to be some tender sentiment upon them about "memory," or "hope," or "roses," or "reunion," and my correspondent must be a sad brute who is not touched by the eloquence of the seal, even if his taste is so bad that he remains deaf to mine.

who dress man's life with beauty; the *Parcæ* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colours sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows; all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now*; but in Oxford I said, "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful Sisters.

These Sisters—by what name shall we call them? If I say simply "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow,—separate cases of sorrow,—whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart, and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations,—that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*.

I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. They spoke not as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sung not; though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung: for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols; *mine* are the words.

What is it the Sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form and their presence, if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline, or presence it were that for ever advanced to the front or for ever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation,—Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever which, heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth, to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her*: still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844–5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides, a ghostly intruder, into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of "Madonna."

The second Sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of

Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in the Mediterranean galleys; of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England; of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar over-thrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a stepmother, as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered;[1] every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsman, whom God will judge; every captive in every dungeon; all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace: all these

[1] This, the reader will be aware, applies chiefly to the cotton and tobacco States of North America; but not to them only: on which account I have not scrupled to figure the sun which looks down upon slavery as *tropical*,—no matter if strictly within the tropics, or simply so near to them as to produce a similar climate.

walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third Sister, who is also the youngest——! Hush! whisper whilst we talk of *her!* Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes, rising so high, *might* be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden: through the treble veil of crape which she wears the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers, for noon of day or noon of night, for ebbing or for flowing tide, may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest Sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum,*—Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai* or Sublime Goddesses,[1] these were the *Eumenides* or Gracious Ladies (so called by antiquity in shuddering propitiation), of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she beckoned to Our Lady of Sighs; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this:

"Lo! here is he whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled; and from heaven I stole away his young heart to

[1] The word σεμνος is usually rendered *venerable* in dictionaries,—not a very flattering epithet for females. But I am disposed to think that it comes nearest to our idea of the *sublime,*—as near as a Greek word *could* come.

mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshipped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolater, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou,"—turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum*, she said,—" wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her*. See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope; wither the relenting of love; scorch the fountains of tears; curse him as only *thou* canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace; so shall he see the things that ought *not* to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had,—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit."

THE FRESHWATER FISHERMAN

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

Part I

This pretty Berkshire of ours, renowned for its pastoral villages, and its picturesque interchange of common and woodland, and small enclosures divided by deep lanes, to which thick borders of hedgerow timber give a character of deep and forest-like richness, seldom seen in counties of more ambitious pretension; —this beautiful Berkshire is for nothing more distinguished than for the number and variety of its rivers. I do not mean, in this catalogue, to include the large proportion of bright, shallow, trouting streams, for the most part unchristened and unregistered even by a parish historian, or the compiler of a county map, and known only as " the brook " by the very people whose meadows they dance through. To confine myself to rivers of state and name, we have, first of all, the rapid, changeful, beautiful Loddon, a frisky, tricksy water-sprite, much addicted to wandering out of bounds, and as different from the

timid, fearful, nymph Lodona, whom Pope, in a metamorphosing strain, was pleased to assign as the source of those clear waters, as anything well can be. Next we have the Kennet —"the Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned," according to the same author, and which, in our part at least, has, generally speaking, a fine pastoral character, now sweeping along through broad valleys of meadow-land, rich and green, and finely dappled by trees, chiefly oak and elm, in park-like groups; now confined within a narrower channel, and spanned by some lofty bridge as it passes the quiet village or small country town, enlivening every scene which it approaches by the pleasant flow of its clear waters, cool and glittering as a moonbeam. Lastly and chiefly, we possess, for the whole length of the county, and for the most part forming its sinuous boundary, the deep majestic Thames, gliding in tranquil grandeur, with a motion so slow as to be almost imperceptible; reflecting as a mirror, in unbroken shadow, every tree and shrub that fringes its banks, and exhibiting, during all its meanders, a lake-like character of stillness and repose—a silent fullness—a calm and gentle dignity, which is, perhaps, in all things, from the human mind to the mighty river, the surest and highest symbol of power. It is singular, that even the small streamlet near Cirencester, where, under the almost equally celebrated name of Isis, the Thames takes its rise, is distinguished by the same unruffled serenity (the calmness of the infant Hercules) for which its subsequent course is so remarkable. And what a course it is! The classic domes of Oxford; the sunny plains of Berkshire; the Buckinghamshire beechwoods; Windsor, with its royal towers; Richmond, and its world of gardens; then London—mighty London; and then the sea—its only rival in riches and in fame. Half the bards of England have sung of their great river; but never, I think, has it been more finely praised than in two sonnets, which I will venture to transcribe from the manuscript which is open before me. They have a local propriety, since the writer, Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, of whose birthplace Berkshire may well be proud, passed his early youth in this neighbourhood, and it is in remembrance of those days that they are written.

TO THE THAMES AT WESTMINSTER, IN RECOLLECTION OF THE SAME RIVER BELOW CAVERSHAM

With no cold admiration do I gaze
Upon thy pomp of waters, matchless stream!
For home-sick fancy kindles with the beam
That on thy lucid bosom coyly plays,

And glides delighted through thy crystal ways,
Till on her eye those wave-fed poplars gleam
Beneath whose shade her first and loveliest maze
She fashioned; where she traced in richest dream
Thy mirror'd course of wood-enshrined repose
Bespread with hordes of spirits fair and bright,
And widening on till at her vision's close
Great London, only then a name of might,
To crown thy full-swoln majesty arose,
A rock-throned city clad in heavenly light.

TO THE SAME RIVER

I may not emulate their lofty aim
Who, in divine imagination bold,
With mighty hills and streams communion hold
As living friends; and scarce I dare to claim
Acquaintance with thee in thy scenes of fame,
Wealthiest of rivers! though in days of old
I loved thee where thy waters sylvan roll'd
And still would fancy thee in part the same
As love perversely clings to some old mate
Estranged by fortune; in his very pride
Seems lifted; waxes in his greatness great;
And silent hails the lot it prophesied:
Content to think in manhood's palmy state
Some ling'ring traces of the child abide.

Our business, however, is not with the mighty Thames—the "wealthiest of rivers"—but with the pleasant and pastoral Kennet.

One of the most romantic spots that it touches in its progress is a fisherman's cottage, on the estate of my friend Colonel Talbot, who, amongst his large manorial property, possesses a right of fishery for some mile or two up the river—a right which, like other manorial possessions, combines a good deal of trouble with its pleasure and its dignity, and obliges the colonel to keep up a sort of river police for the defence of his watery demesnes. This police consists of Adam Stokes the fisherman, of his follower Gilbert, and his boy Ned Gilbert, who is, after all, but semi-aquatic, and belongs in "division tripartite" to the park-keeper, the gamekeeper, and the fisherman, waging fierce war with the poachers in each of his vocations, one night in defence of the deer, the next of the pheasants, and the third of the pike. Gilbert, who in right of his terrene avocations wears a green livery and a gold-laced hat, is by no means a regular inhabitant of the cottage by the Kennet side, but may be found quite as frequently up at the park, sometimes at the dog-kennel, sometimes in the servants' hall, leaving the river to the efficient watchfulness of its amphibious guardians, Adam Stokes, the boy Ned, and their dog Neptune, who, excepting

when Adam was attracted by the charms of a stronger liquid to the tap-room of the Four Horseshoes, were seldom seen half a furlong from their proper element.

Adam was a man fit to encounter poachers by land or by water—a giant of a man, with more than a giant's strength, and without the gentleness which so often accompanies conscious power: he knew his full force, and delighted in its exhibition. The unwieldy boat was in his brawny hands a child's toy, and the heavy oar a bulrush. Bold was the poacher that dared to encounter Adam Stokes! His very voice, loud as that of a boatswain, was sufficient to awe any common ruffian, and the bold, bluff, weather-beaten visage, keen eye, and fearless bearing, were in excellent keeping with tones that seemed at their quietest as if issuing from a speaking-trumpet. His dress beseemed his person and his occupation—boots that might bid defiance to mud or water, a blue jacket that had borne many a storm, and an old sealskin cap, surmounting his shaggy black hair, formed his general equipment. Add a quid of tobacco rolling from side to side of a capacious mouth, a beard of a fortnight's growth, a knowing wink, and an uncouth but good-humoured grin, and you will have a tolerable notion of the outer man of Master Adam.

His inward qualities were pretty much what might be expected from such an exterior—rude, rough, and coarse, but faithful, bold and honest, and not without a certain touch of fun and good fellowship, and blunt kindness, that rendered him no small favourite with his cronies of the "Four Horseshoes," amongst whom his waterman's songs and sailor's stories (yarns, as he called them) were deservedly popular. His early history was rather a puzzle in the good village of Aberleigh. He had been brought by Colonel Talbot to his present situation about ten years back, a stranger in the neighbourhood; and little as in general Adam affected concealment, he appeared to have some amusement in mystifying his neighbours on this point. Never were opinions more various. Some held that he had been a London waterman, and quoted his songs, his dexterity at the oar, and his familiarity with the slang peculiar to the great river, as irrefragable proofs that such had been his vocation. Others asserted that he was an old man-of-war's man, citing his long yarns, his proficiency in making and drinking grog, his boldness in battle, and his hatred of the Monsieurs, as convincing testimony in their favour. Others again (but they were his maligners) hinted that well as he liked

grog, a drop of neat Cognac was still more welcome, and insinuated that some of the yarns had about them a great air of smuggling;—whilst another party, more malevolent still, asserted that boldness might belong to other trades as well as to a sailor, and that his skill as a fisherman, and such a subtlety in detecting nets and lines, as had never before been met with in these parts, savoured strongly of his having at some time or other followed the poaching business himself. This last, in particular, was the observation of his next neighbour, Nanny Sims, a washerwoman and gossip of high repute, who, being a thriving widow of some forty, or belike forty-five, had on his first arrival set her cap, as the phrase is, at Adam, and, in affront at his neglect of her charms, was in a small way as comfortably his enemy as heart could desire.

Little recked he of her love or her enmity. On he lived, a bold, bluff, burly bachelor, with his boy Ned and his dog Neptune, each, after his several way, as burly and shaggy as himself, the terror of water-thieves, and the prime favourite of his master, who, a thorough sportsman, and altogether one of the most complete and admirable specimens that I have ever known of an English country gentleman, refined by education and travel, set the highest value on his skill as a fisher, and his good management in preserving the fishery. A first-rate favourite was Adam Stokes.

His habitation was, as I have said, beautifully situated at a point of the Kennet where, winding suddenly round an abrupt hill, it flowed beneath a bank so high and precipitous, that but for its verdure it might have passed for a cliff, leaving just room on the bank for a small white cottage, the chimneys of which were greatly over-topped by the woody ridge behind them, while the garden on one side sloped in natural terraces from the hill to the river, and a narrow orchard on the other was planted ledge above ledge, like a vineyard on the Rhine. Fishing-nets drying on the fine smooth turf, and the boat fastened to a post and swaying in the water, completed the picture.

An unfrequented country road on the other side of the river was my nearest way to Talbot Park, and one day last March, driving thither in my little pony-phaeton, I stopped to observe Adam, who had just caught an enormous pike, weighing, as we afterwards found, above twenty pounds, and, after landing it on one side of the water, was busied in repairing a part of his tackle which the struggles of the creature had broken. It was still full of life as it lay on the grass, and appeared to me such a load, that,

after complimenting Adam (who was of my acquaintance) on the luck that had sent, and the skill that had caught, such a fish, I offered to take it for him to the Park.

"Lord bless you, ma'am!" responded Master Stokes, eyeing my slight equipage and pretty pony, as well as the small lad who was driving me, with some slyness, "Lord help you, ma'am, you've no notion how obstropulous these great fishes be. He'd splash your silk gown all over, and mayhap overset you into the bargain. No, no—I've catched him, and I must manage him—besides, I want to speak to madam. Here, lad," added he, calling to his boy, who, with Neptune, was standing on the opposite side of the river, watching our colloquy, "gather them violets on the bank; they're always the first in the country; and bring the basket over in the boat to take this fellow to the great house—mind how you pick the flowers, you lubber, I want 'em for madam."

Somewhat amused by seeing how my fair friend's passion for flowers was understood and humoured, even by the roughest of her dependents, I pursued my way to the house, passed the pretty lodge and the magnificent garden, with its hothouses, greenhouses, and conservatories, its fountains and its basins, its broad walks and shady alleys; drove through the noble park, with its grand masses of old forest-trees—oak, and beech, and elm, and tree-like thorns, the growth of centuries; thridded the scattered clumps, about which the dappled deer were lying; skirted the clear lakelet, where water-fowl of all sorts were mingled with stately swans; and finally gained the house, a superb mansion, worthy of its grounds, at the door of which I met the colonel, who, pheasant-shooting and hunting and coursing being fairly over, intended to solace himself with shooting rabbits, and was sallying forth with his gun in his hand, and a train of long-bodied, crooked-legged, very outlandish-looking dogs at his heels, of a sort called the rabbit-beagle, reckoned very handsome, I find, in their way, but in my mind pre-eminently ugly. I did not, however, affront my kind host, a person whom everybody likes, in right of his frank, open, amiable character, and his delightful manners; I did not insult him by abusing his dogs, but, passing with a gracious salutation, we parted—he to his sport, and I to my visit.

If Colonel Talbot be a delightful man, Mrs. Talbot is a thrice delightful woman. To say nothing of the higher qualities for which she is deservedly eminent, I have seldom met with any one who contrives to be at the same time so charming and so

witty. She is very handsome, too, and, combining her own full-blown and magnificent beauty with her love of that full-blown and beautiful flower, I call her the Queen of the Dahlias,—a nickname which she submits to the more readily, as her collection of that superb plant is nearly unrivalled. In March, however, even she, great forcer though she be, can hardly force a dahlia, so that I found her in her drawing-room without her favourite flower, but surrounded by stands of rhododendrons, azaleas, daphnes, pinks, lilies of the valley, and roses without end; and after first admiring and then deprecating her display of forced plants, as forestalling their natural blossoming, and deadening the summer pleasure, quoting to the same effect Shakespeare's fine lines in the *Love's Labour Lost*:

> At Christmas I no more desire a rose
> Than look for snow in May's newfangled shows,
> But like of each thing that in season grows.

After a little battle on this, an old subject of dispute between us, we fell into talk on other topics, and I soon perceived that my charming hostess was not in her usual spirits.

"But what's the matter, my dear Mrs. Talbot? You say that all friends are well; and I see that the flowers are prosperous in spite of my lecture; and the pets,—pussy purring on the sofa, the swans sailing on the water, and the pied peacock tapping the window at this very moment;—the pets are flourishing like the flowers. What can have happened to vex you?"

"Enough to have disturbed the patience of Grisildis herself, if Grisildis had ever known the comfort of a favourite waiting-maid. Laurette has given me warning."

"Laurette! Is it possible? The paragon of *filles de chambre*! the princess of milliners! the very queen of the toilet! Laurette, so dexterous, so handy, she that could do not only all that was possible to waiting-women, but all that was impossible! and so attached, too! what can be the cause? who can have stolen her from you?"

"She's going to be married!"

"To whom?"

"Heaven knows! she would not tell me his name, but described him as 'un brave garçon.' Somebody in the village, I fancy! some lout of a farmer, or bumpkin of a carpenter. She that cannot speak three words of English, and is as unfit for a farmer's wife as I am. To think of my losing Laurette!"

At this point of our dialogue, Master Adam Stokes was

announced, and we adjourned into the hall to admire the fish and talk to the fisherman. There stood Adam, cap in hand, more shaggy and ragged than ever, exulting over his enormous fish, and backed by his adherents, Ned and Neptune; whilst the airy Frenchwoman, tricked out as usual in her silk gown, her embroidered apron, her high comb, and her large ear-rings, stood against a marble table, arranging the violets which Ned had brought in a small china cup. I must go to her own language for words to describe the favourite French maid—*gentille et jolie* seem expressly made for her, and as she stood with an air of consciousness quite unusual to her manner, placing the violets topsy-turvy in her confusion, I thought that I had never seen Laurette half so attractive. Her lady took no notice of her, but remained in gracious colloquy with the fisherman. At last she turned towards the drawing-room.

"If you please, ma'am," said Adam, "I'd be greatly obliged to you, if you'd speak a good word for me to his honour." And there he stopped.

"What about, Adam?" inquired Mrs. Talbot, returning to the middle of the hall.

"About my marrying, ma'am; if so be the colonel has no objection"; continued Adam, twirling his cap.

"Marrying!" rejoined Mrs. Talbot; "all the world seems thinking of marrying! who is the fair lady, Adam,—Nanny Sims?"

"Nanny Sims! not she, indeed, ma'am," resumed Master Stokes. "I don't know who would trouble their heads about such an old hulk, when they might be master of such a tight-made vessel as this!" quoth the fisherman, grinning and jerking his head, and clutching the gown of the pretty Frenchwoman, whilst his faithful adherents, Ned and Neptune, grinned, and jerked, and wagged head and tail in unison.

"Laurette! do you mean Laurette?—you who hate the French, and she who can't speak English!"

"A fig for her lingo, ma'am. Look what a tight little frigate 'tis! A fig for her lingo!"

"Et toi, Laurette! es-tu folle?"

"Ah de grace, madame! c'est un si brave garçon!" And outrageous as the union seemed, as incongruous as a match between Caliban and Ariel, the lovers persevered, and the lady, half provoked and half amused, consented; and at the month's end they were married, with as fair a prospect of happiness as any couple in the parish.

Part II

ADAM STOKES IN HIS MARRIED STATE

When last I had seen Master Stokes the fisherman, in his bachelor condition, it was in the week when February ends and March begins, when the weather was as bluff and boisterous as his own bluff and boisterous self; when the velvet buds were just sprouting on the sallow, the tufted tassels hanging from the hazel, and the early violet and "rathe primrose" peeping timidly forth from sunny banks and sheltered crevices, as if still half afraid to brave the stormy sky.

The next time that I passed by the banks of the Kennet was in the lovely season which just precedes the merry month of May. The weather was soft and balmy, the sky bright above, the earth fair below; the turf by the roadside was powdered with daisies, the budding hedgerows gay with the white ochil, the pansy, and the wild geranium; the orchards hung with their own garlands of fruit-blossoms, waving over seas of golden daffodils; the coppice tapestried with pansies, ground-ivy, and wood-anemone, whilst patches of the delicate wood-sorrel were springing under the holly brake and from the roots of old beech-trees; and the meadows were literally painted with cowslips, orchises, the brilliant flowers of the water-ranunculus, the chequered fritillary, and the enamelled wild hyacinth. The river went dancing and sparkling along, giving back in all its freshness the tender green of the landscape, and the bright and sunny sky; birds were singing in every bush; bees and butterflies were on the wing, and myriads of water-insects added their pleasant sound to all the general harmony of nature. It was spring in all its loveliness, and never is spring more lovely than in our Kennet meadows.

The fisherman's hut did not disgrace the beauty of the picture. The white cottage, nested in the green bank, with its hanging garden full of stocks and wall-flowers, its blooming orchard, and its thin wreath of grey smoke sailing up the precipitous hill, and lost amid the overhanging trees, looked like the very emblem of peace and comfort. Adam and his dog Neptune were standing in the boat, which Master Stokes's stout arm was pushing from shore with a long pole, nodding a farewell to his wife, and roaring at the top of his stentorian voice his favourite stave of "Rule Britannia"; Laurette, on

her part, was seated at the open door of the cottage, trim as a bride, with her silk gown, her large ear-rings, her high comb and her pretty apron, her dress contrasting strangely with her employment, which was no other than darning her husband's ponderous and unwieldy hose, but with a face radiant with happiness and gaiety, as her light and airy voice sung the light and airy burden of a song in high favour among the *soubrettes* of Paris.

C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour,
Qui fait le monde à la ronde,
Et chaque jour, à son tour,
Le monde fait l'amour.

"C'est l'amour, l'amour, l'amour," came ringing across the water in every pause of her husband's mighty and patriotic chant, mingled with the shrill notes of Ned, who was birds'-nesting on the hillside, peeping into every furze bush for the five speckled eggs of the grey linnet and whistling, "Oh no, we never mention her," with all his might.

It was a curious combination, certainly, and yet one that seemed to me to give token of much happiness; and on questioning my friend Mrs. Talbot, the charming Queen of the Dahlias frankly admitted, that however it might turn out eventually, Laurette's match did at present appear to have produced more comfort to both parties than could have been anticipated from so preposterous a union. "Adam adores her," pursued Mrs. Talbot, "spends all the money he can come by in sailor-like finery, red ribbons, and yellow gowns, which Laurette has too good a wardrobe to need, and too much taste to wear; can't pass within a yard of her without a loving pinch of her pretty round cheek; and swears by every seaman's oath that ever was invented, that she's the neatest-built vessel, with the comeliest figure-head, that ever was launched. And, incredible as it seems, Laurette loves him; delights in his rough kindness, his boldness, and his honesty: calls him still 'un brave garçon'; enters into his humour; studies his comfort; has learnt more English during her six weeks' marriage than in six years that she lived with me; and has even advanced so far as to approach, as nearly as a French tongue may do, to the pronunciation of her own name, Stokes—a terrible trial to Gallic organs. In short," continued Mrs. Talbot, "of a very foolish thing, it has turned out better than might have been expected; Adam's adherents, Ned and Neptune, fairly idolise their new mistress; poor thing, her kindness, and good-nature, and gaiety, were always most

delightful; and Ned is, she assures me, a very handy boy in the house, does all the dirty work, dusts and scrubs, and washes and cooks, and trots about in a pair of high pattens and a checked apron, just exactly like a maid-of-all-work. I send Gilbert to her almost every day with one trifle or another, sometimes a basket of provisions, sometimes my reversionary flowers (for Laurette can't live without flowers), and, on the whole, I really think she will do very well."

This account was most satisfactory; but, happening again to pass Laurette's cottage in the bowery month of June, I saw cause to fear that a change had passed over the pretty Frenchwoman's prospects. Outwardly the picture was as bright, or brighter, than ever. It was summer—gay, smiling summer. The hawthorn-buds in the hedgerows were exchanged for the full-blown blossoms of the wayfaring-tree, whose double circle of white stars, regular as if cut with a stamp, forms so beautiful a cluster of flowerets, and contrasts so gaily with the deep pink of the wild rose, and the pale, but graceful garlands of the woodbine; the meadows had, indeed, lost their flowery glory, and were covered partly with rich swathes of new-cut grass, and partly with large haycocks, dappling the foreground with such depth and variety of light and shadow; but the river's edge was gay as a garden with flags and water-lilies, and the pendent bunches of the delicate snowflake, the most elegant of aquatic plants; and Laurette's garden itself, one bright bed of pinks, and roses, and honeysuckles, and berry-bushes, with their rich transparent fruit, might almost have vied in colour and fragrance with that of her mistress. The change was not in the place, but in the inhabitants.

Adam was employed in landing a net full of fish, perch, roach, and dace, such a haul as ought to have put any fisherman into good humour, but which certainly had had no such effect on the present occasion. He looked as black as a thunder-cloud, swore at the poor fish as he tossed them on the bank, called Ned a lubber; and when, in a fit of absence, he from mere habit resumed his patriotic ditty, shouted, "Britons never will be slaves," with such a scowl at his poor foreign wife, that it could only be interpreted into a note of defiance. She, on her side, was still working at her cottage door, or rather sitting there listlessly with her work (a checked shirt of her churlish husband's) in her lap, her head drooping, and the gay air of "C'est l'amour" exchanged for a plaintive romance, which ran, as well as I could catch it, something in this fashion:

Celui qui sut toucher mon cœur,
Jurait d'aimer toute la vie,
Mais, hélas! c'était un trompeur,
Celui qui sut toucher mon cœur.

S'il abjurait cruelle erreur,
S'il revenait à son amie,
Ah! toujours il serait vainqueur,
S'il abjurait cruelle erreur.

And when the romance was done, which might have touched Adam's heart, if he could but have understood it, poor Laurette sighed amain, took up the checked shirt, and seemed likely to cry; Neptune looked doleful, as one who comprehended that something was the matter, but could not rightly understand what; and Ned was in the dumps. A dreary change had come over the whole family, of which the cause was not known to me for some time afterwards:—Adam was jealous.

The cause of this jealousy was no other than the quondam candidate for the fisherman's favour, his prime aversion, Nanny Sims.

This Nanny Sims was, as I have said, a washerwoman and Adam's next neighbour, she tenanting a cottage and orchard on the same side of the river, but concealed from observation by the romantic and precipitous bank which formed so picturesque a background to Laurette's pretty dwelling. In person, Nanny was as strong a contrast to the light and graceful Frenchwoman as could well be imagined; she being short and stout, and blowsy and frowsy, realising exactly, as to form, Lord Byron's expression, "a dumpy woman," and accompanying it with all the dowdiness and slovenliness proper to her station. Never was even washerwoman more untidy. A cap all rags, from which the hair came straggling in elf-locks over a face which generally looked red-hot, surmounted by an old bonnet, originally black, now rusty, and so twisted into crooks and bends that its pristine shape was unguessable; a coloured cotton handkerchief pinned over a short-sleeved, open, stuff gown, and three or four aprons, each wet through, tied one above another, black stockings, men's shoes, and pattens higher and noisier than ever pattens were, completed her apparel.

Her habits were such as suited her attire and her condition. An industrious woman, it must be confessed, was Nanny Sims. Give her green tea, and strong beer, and gin at discretion, and she would wash the four-and-twenty hours round, only abstracting an hour apiece for her two breakfasts, ditto ditto for her

two luncheons, two hours for her dinner, one for her afternoon's tea, and another for supper. And then she would begin again, and dry, and starch, and mangle, and iron, without let or pause, save those demanded by the above-mentioned refections. Give her gin enough, and she never seemed to require the gentle refreshment called sleep. Sancho's fine ejaculation, "Blessed is the man that invented sleep!" with which most mortals have so entire a sympathy, would have been thrown away upon Nanny Sims. The discoverer of the still would have been the fitter object of her benediction. Gin, sheer gin, was to her what ale was to Boniface; and she throve upon it. Never was woman so invulnerable to disease. Hot water was her element, and she would go seething and steaming from the wash-tub, reeking and dripping from top to toe, into the keenest north-east wind, without taking more harm than the wet sheets and tablecloths which went through her hands. They dried, and so did she; and to all feeling of inconvenience that parboiled and soddened flesh seemed as inaccessible as the linen.

A hardworking woman was Nanny;—but the part of her that worked hardest was her tongue. Benedick's speech to Beatrice, "I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer," gives but a faint notion of the activity of that member in the mouth of our laundress. If ever mechanical contrivance had approached half so nearly to the perpetual motion, the inventor would have considered the problem as solved, and would have proclaimed the discovery accordingly. It was one incessant wag. Of course, the tongue was a washer-woman's tongue, and the clatter such as might suit the accompaniments of the wash-tub and the gin-bottle, not forgetting that important accessory to scandal in higher walks of life, the tea-table. The pendulum vibrated through every degree and point of gossiping, from the most innocent matter-of-fact to the most malicious slander, and was the more mischievous, as, being employed to assist the laundrymaid in several families, as well as taking in washing at home, her powers of collecting and diffusing false reports were by no means inconsiderable. She was the general tale-bearer of the parish, and scattered dissension as the wind scatters the thistle-down, sowing the evil seed in all directions. What added to the danger of her lies was, that they were generally interwoven with some slender and trivial thread of truth, which gave something like the colour of fact to her narrative, and that her legends were generally delivered in a careless undesigning style, as if she spoke from

the pure love of talking, and did not care whether you believed her or not, which had a strong but unconscious effect on the credulity of his auditors. Perhaps, to a certain extent, she might be innocent of ill-intention, and might not, on common occasions, mean to do harm by her evil-speaking; but, in the case of Laurette, I can hardly acquit her of malice. She hated her for all manner of causes: as her next neighbour; as a Frenchwoman; as pretty; as young; as fine; as the favourite of Mrs. Talbot; and last and worst, as the wife of Adam Stokes; and she omitted no opportunity of giving vent to her spite.

First, she said that she was idle; then, that she was proud; then, that she was sluttish; then, that she was extravagant; then, that she was vain; then, that she was rouged; then, that she wore a wig; then, that she was by no means so young as she wished to be thought; and then, that she was ugly. These shafts fell wide of the mark. People had only to look at the pretty, smiling Laurette, and at her neat cottage, and they were disproved at a glance. At last, Nancy, over the wash-tub at the Park, gave out that Laurette was coquettish; and that she would have Master Adam look about him; that honest English husbands who married French wives, and young wives, and pretty wives into the bargain, had need to look about them; that she, for her part, was very sorry for her worthy neighbour, —but that folks who lived near, saw more than other folks thought for;—and then Nanny sighed and held her tongue. Nanny's holding her tongue produced a wonderful sensation in the Park laundry; such an event had never occurred there before; it was thought that the cause of her speechlessness must be something most portentous and strange, and questions were rained upon her from all quarters.

For an incredible space of time (at least two minutes) Nanny maintained a resolute silence, shook her head, and said nothing. At last, in pure confidence, she disclosed to five women, the laundrymaid, the dairymaid, two housemaids, and another charwoman, the important fact, that it was not for nothing that Gilbert carried a basket every day from Mrs. Talbot to Laurette; that her husband, poor man, had not found it out yet, but that, doubtless, his eyes would be opened some day or other; that she did not blame Gilbert so much, poor fellow, the chief advances being made by the foreign madam, who had said to her, in her jargon, that she should be dead if the basket did not come every day, meaning, no doubt, if he did not bring the basket; and that all the world would see what would come

of it. Then, recommending secrecy, which all parties promised, Nanny put on her shawl, and her pattens, and trudged home; and before night the whole house knew of it, and before the next day, the whole parish—the only exception being, perhaps, Laurette herself, and Colonel and Mrs. Talbot, who were, as great people generally are, happily ignorant of the nonsense talked in their own kitchen.

Two persons, at all events, heard the story, with as many circumstantial additions as the tale of the three black crows,—and those two were Adam Stokes, whom it made as jealous as Othello, upon somewhat the same course of reasoning, and Gilbert himself, who, something of a rural coxcomb, although no practised seducer, began at last to believe that what everybody said must be partly true, that though he himself were perfectly guiltless of love, the fair lady might have had the misfortune to be smitten with his personal good gifts (for Gilbert was a well-looking, ruddy swain, of some nineteen or twenty, the very age when young lads confide in the power of their own attractions), and to make up his mind to fall in love with her out of gratitude.

Accordingly, he began to court Laurette at every opportunity; and Laurette, who, in spite of her French education, had no notion that an Englishman's wife could be courted by anybody but her husband, and whose comprehension of the language was still too vague to enable her to understand him thoroughly, continued to treat him with her usual friendly kindness, the less inclined to make any observation on his conduct, since she was altogether engrossed by the moodiness of her husband, who had suddenly changed from the most loving to the most surly of mortals. Laurette tried to soothe and pacify him, but the more she strove against his ill-humour, the worse it grew, and the poor young Frenchwoman at last took to singing melancholy songs, and sighing, and drooping, and hanging her head like a bereaved turtle-dove. It was in this state that I saw her.

Matters were now advancing towards a crisis. Gilbert saw Laurette's dejection, and, imputing it to a hopeless passion for himself, ventured to send her a *billet-doux*, written by Colonel Talbot's valet (for although he had learned to write at a national school, he had already contrived to forget his unpractised lesson), which, in terms fine enough for a valet himself, requested her to honour him with a private interview at the stile, by the towing-path, at nine in the evening, when Adam would be away.

This English, which was too fine to be good—that is to say, to

be idiomatic, proved more intelligible to Laurette than his previous declarations, although aided by all the eloquence of eyes. She, however, resolved to take further advice on the occasion, and showed the epistle to Ned.

"What is this writing here?" said Laurette. "What will it say?"

"It is a love-letter, Mrs. Stokes," answered Ned.

"What does it want?" questioned Mrs. Stokes; "me to give a rendezvous at de stile?"

"Yes," rejoined Ned; "you to go to the stile."

"De people is mad!" exclaimed poor Laurette. "Dere's your masterre"—

"Master's jealous!" cried Ned.

"And dis wicked man?"

"He's in love!"

"De people is fools!" exclaimed poor Laurette. "De people is mad! But I'll go to de stile—and Nède, you and Nèpe shall go too." And so it was settled.

Nine o'clock came, and the party set off. And about five minutes past nine Nanny Sims met Adam near the towing-path.

"Do you want your wife, Master Stokes?" quoth the crone. "Are you looking for Gilbert? I saw them both but now, one a little way on this side of the stile, the other a little beyond. They'll have met by this time." And without pausing for an answer, on she went.

Adam pursued his walk with furious strides, and paused as he came within sight of the place, considering in which way he had best announce his presence. The supposed lovers had not yet met; but in an instant Gilbert jumped over the stile, and caught hold of Laurette; and in another instant the active Frenchwoman escaped from his arms, gave him a box on the ear that almost upset him, called to "Nède" and "Nèpe," both which trusty adherents lay in ambush by the wayside, and poured forth such a flood of scolding in French and broken English, mingled with occasional cuffs, the dog barking and Ned laughing the whilst, that the discomfited gallant fairly took to his heels, and fled. In his way, however, he encountered Adam, who, without wasting a word upon the matter, took him up in one hand and flung him into the Kennet.

"A ducking 'ill do him no harm," quoth Adam: "he can swim like a fish; and if I catch Nanny Sims, I'll give her a taste of cold water, too," added the fisherman, hugging his pretty wife, who was now sobbing on his bosom; "and I deserve to be

ducked myself for mistrusting of thee, like a land-lubber; but if ever I sarve thee so again," continued he, straining her to his honest bosom—" if ever I sarve thee so again, may I have a round dozen the next minute, and be spliced to Nanny Sims into the bargain."

THE LOVE QUARREL

AGNES STRICKLAND

May never was the month of love,
For May is full of flowers;
But rather April, richly kind,
For love is full of showers.
FATHER SOUTHWELL.

THERE are partings which are truly " such sweet sorrow," that they only appear as the heralds of happier meetings; and there are partings when stern destiny imperatively divides those whom love has united so fondly, that absence but renders them the dearer to each other; and there are also partings where the inexorable hand of death severs the silver tie that has linked faithful hearts so firmly, that the extinction of life alone can loosen that tender bond of affection. Such separations are painful, but there is no bitterness in the tears which they cause —tears in which the cordial of hope, or the heavenly balm of resignation to the divine will, is gently infused, leading the mourner to look forward to a reunion with the beloved object in those happy realms where partings are unknown. But oh! how different are the feelings of those who separate in doubt, in anger, and disdain, when the wounded spirit of each is prompted, by offended pride, to veil its agonies under the semblance of coldness and indifference!

It was thus that Helen Milbourne had parted from the object of her tenderest affection, the cavalier Colonel Dagworth, in the moonlight recesses of her Uncle Ireton's garden at Irmingland Hall, where they had met, at peril of life to him and maiden fame to her. They had met in trembling hope, and with hearts overflowing with a love that neither the difference of party, rank, station, the wrath of kindred, nor the obstacles of time, absence, danger, and uncertainty, could overcome; and yet they had separated in anger, in consequence of a trifling

misunderstanding that had arisen between them,—a cause of offence so slight that it would have been difficult for either to have explained why it was given, or wherefore it was taken; yet it had served to rend asunder those ties of tender union which would have defied the efforts of a world combined to have unknit. They parted on either side with a pang more bitter than the separation of soul and body, each smarting under the sense of injurious treatment from the other, and strangely imagining that they had mutually become, in one short hour, the object of hatred—ay, even of scorn—to the being most fondly beloved on earth. And oh, if pride would have permitted either to allow their natural emotions of tenderness and grief to be perceptible to the other, how different would have been the result of their first—their last—their only quarrel! As it was, Colonel Dagworth, agitated and distressed by the painful conviction of the hopeless position of the royal cause, and the ruin that impended over himself in common with all who nobly adhered to the fallen fortunes of his unhappy sovereign, deigned not to offer the slightest attempt at apology or conciliation to the wealthy heiress of the Parliamentary Commissioner, Ralph Milbourne, and the niece of the victorious Roundhead chieftain, Ireton; but, loosening the bridle-rein of his gallant grey from the withered arm of one of the stunted sallows that overhung the moat, he made a stern and silent parting obeisance to her; and, vaulting into the saddle, unconsciously vented his own intense sensation of mental anguish, by striking the rowels of his spurs so sharply into the sides of the faithful animal who had patiently bided his pleasure, that the bloody streaks on its glossy sides were distinctly visible, and would have excited an abhorrent exclamation from Helen had she observed it. But no! she, too, in imitation of her angry lover's assumed disdain, with a haughty acknowledgment of his repulsive farewell, turned proudly away; yet it was partly to conceal the gush of tears, that overflowed her eyes at the very moment she was acting a part so foreign to her nature; and when she was sure that her motion could not be detected, she hurried to the only spot that commanded a view of the road he had taken, and eagerly strained her tearful gaze to catch a last look of his stately form, as he gained a sudden angle in the road which would conceal his further progress; and here the anxious query proposed itself to her fluttering heart: "Will he not turn his head to look once more?"

He did not. The resentful flush of wounded pride overspread the cheek of Helen, which a moment before had been of the hue

of marble, and indignantly dashing away the tears that hung on its polished surface, she murmured,—

"It is past!—You have spurned a true heart from you, Edward Dagworth, and I will think of you no more!"

"No more!" did Helen say? Ay, thus she said, and many a time did she repeat her words; too often, indeed to adhere to the resolution she formed in the bitterness of what she considered slighted love and wronged affection. That indignant sentence, "I will think of him no more," was the spring of all her thoughts, forbidding her to meditate on aught beside the man she was perpetually vowing she would forget. Alas! he appeared the sole tenant of her memory, so intimately was his idea entwined with every feeling of her nature. It was not in the power of either time, absence, or a sense of his injurious unkindness, to banish his loved image from her mind, though every day she repeated her vain words, "I will think of him no more!" But how could she cease to think of him, in the perilous days when the impending cloud of ruin gathered more darkly every hour over his cause, and the events of the next night lead him to a prison or a scaffold, if, indeed, he escaped the contingencies of the battlefield, or survived the hardships and dangers of the siege of Colchester, where he was now shut up with Lord Capel and the rest of its brave defenders, by the beleaguering force of Sir Thomas Fairfax.

The parents of Colonel Dagworth and Helen Milbourne had been neighbours, but not friends; they belonged to separate and distinct classes of society. The proud old Norfolk knight, Sir Reginald Dagworth, whose only son Colonel Dagworth was, looked down with unfeigned contempt on the acquired wealth and ostentatious pretensions of Master Ralph Milbourne, who had purchased large estates in his immediate vicinity; and whose magnificent new-built mansion, large establishment, and showy equipages, were calculated to excite a painful comparison with the faded splendour of his ancient family,—a family that once held almost princely rank and possessions in his native country, but which, in consequence of a series of imprudences or vicissitudes, was rapidly sinking into decay.

The undesirable location of a wealthy *parvenu* neighbour was a subject of great annoyance both to Sir Reginald Dagworth and Lady Alice, his wife, who considered it incumbent on them, for the honour of their house, to make an effort to support the superiority of their claims to be the great people of the place; while Ralph Milbourne failed not on his part to testify all the

offensive contempt for rank and ancestry which is one of the peculiar characteristics of vulgar pride, and on all occasions obtruded an offensive opposition to every measure Sir Reginald appeared desirous of carrying in county business. It was much to be lamented that these sylvan foes had nothing better to occupy their time and thoughts than a hostile *espionage* on each other's actions, and an eager and unworthy attention to the exaggerated reports of servants and dependents of what each said of the other; for by this means a feud so deadly was fostered, that the breaking out of the civil war between the king and parliament was privately hailed by both with a degree of satisfaction, as affording an excuse for those open acts of violence and aggression which the laws had hitherto operated to prevent. They were arrayed, of course, on opposite sides, for Sir Reginald Dagworth was a part of the old *régime*—a concomitant ingredient of that system which it was the object of the republican party to destroy; and Ralph Milbourne's hatred of that privileged class, which, he was sensible, looked down on him and his golden claims to consideration with contempt, was such, that he was willing to hazard even the loss of that wealth which he secretly worshipped, to assist in humbling its haughty and hated members. There were but two things he loved on earth—his money and his one fair daughter; whom he regarded as its heiress, and prized her perhaps more dearly on that account than for all the charms both of mind and person with which nature had so richly endowed her.

But though he professed such hostility of feeling against the whole order of aristocracy, which was then, as at the present moment, peculiarly denounced by a party as the authors of all the existing or fancied evils in the state, he was secretly desirous of his descendants in the third generation being members of this vituperated body, through the marriage of his daughter with no less a person than the heir of his sworn enemy; and deeply mortified at the apparent insensibility of young Dagworth to the attractions of his lovely daughter, and his blindness to the pecuniary advantages of such an alliance, he was perpetually venting his chagrin by contemptuous expressions respecting him; constantly warning Helen never to degrade herself by bestowing a thought upon him; protesting that, if she condescended to be made a convenience of, by wedding the heir of impoverished greatness, to patch up the fallen fortunes of his house with her wealth, he would utterly renounce her.

These cautions were, perhaps, in the first instance, the occa-

sion of making Edward Dagworth an object of attention to his fair neighbour; for she concluded that he must have given her father some reason for an observation so otherwise unaccountable to her. She even ventured to imagine that overtures of a matrimonial nature must have been indirectly, if not directly, made; and she felt a sort of trembling anxiety to ascertain how far the heart of Edward Dagworth had been interested in the proposition.

It was then that she first became aware of the majestic beauty of his features, and the air of lofty rectitude and amiable frankness which they expressed; and then, he was so different from the stern sectarians, rude levellers, and wily politicians, whom she was accustomed to meet at the house of her Uncle Ireton! With neither of these classes had she a feeling or sympathy in common; their manners were offensive to her taste, and she regarded their projects for the subversion of the laws and religion of her forefathers with alarm and terror; while the dread that she might one day be made the bond and victim of a conventional plight between the men of her family and some influential party leader, perpetually haunted and disquieted her. In contradistinction to a destiny so revolting to her feelings, she was at times tempted to picture to her youthful fancy the possibility of becoming the wife of Edward Dagworth, till the idea became a fondly cherished hope; and she even felt pleasure in the thought of devoting her wealth to the very purpose so earnestly contemned by her father, that of building up the ruined fortunes of his ancient house; of which every member, even those haughty parents of his, who regarded her and hers as beings far beneath their high *caste*, became objects of powerful interest to her.

Edward Dagworth meantime was far from being unconscious of the charms of his lovely neighbour; and in such cases there is always a sort of undefined intelligence which silently informs a pair so situated as these were, that they are becoming dear to each other. It is certain that the eyes of both met oftener than they were accustomed to do; and on meeting were mutually withdrawn in confusion, till at length, without having exchanged a single sentence of love, they were reciprocally wooed and won, and mutely established on the footing of lovers.

Their parents, their friends, the world suspected it not; but they understood each other's feelings, and that was enough for them. Opportunity alone was needed to cement those silent vows of love and lasting faith before the altar of God.

The erection of the royal standard at Nottingham, and the eventful scenes that followed, served to remove them from their dreaming bliss. The storm of civil war had burst upon the land, and was arraying brothers against brothers, fathers against sons; no wonder, then, if rivals and political foes were espousing adverse causes.

Edward Dagworth engaged in the service of his insulted sovereign with no common ardour; and his name was soon proudly distinguished among the gallant partisans of the royal cause. Even the hoary-headed knight, his father, forgot the infirmities of age to assume the cuirass and steel cap, and sentenced the last of his oak groves to the axe, to assist in raising a regiment for the service of the king.

Ralph Milbourne, though little qualified to play the soldier, found himself a person of consequence with the adherents of the parliament, to whom his wealth was, in the outset of their enterprise, before they had obtained the power of making the cavaliers pay the charges of the warfare against themselves, a matter of great importance; and for the use of this they were contented not only to allow him the exorbitant interest he demanded, but bestowed upon him, in addition, both civil and military rank in their embryo republic; paying him, at the same time, those flattering compliments and attentions that had always been the objects of his ambition, and the lack of which, the mainspring of his disaffection to the government and of his hatred to the higher classes. Neither his wealth, his magnificent establishment, nor his assumption of consequence, had been able to procure for him, in the neighbourhood of his Norfolk estates, the respect he coveted. Sir Reginald Dagworth was evidently regarded there as a sort of hereditary sovereign by the peasantry and yeomanry; and the profound homage with which every member of this ancient but impoverished family was treated, was the generous, unbought offering of the heart, which gold could never purchase.

Ralph Milbourne was evidently considered as an upstart stranger, and the more he added house to house, and field to field, the greater object of dislike did he become in that neighbourhood; where loyalty was esteemed as a virtue, and enmity to the church was regarded as a crime. For a time, Ralph Milbourne quitted Norfolk for a residence in the metropolis, which his pecuniary transactions with the leaders of his party rendered necessary. London was in the hands of the Roundheads. A splendid mansion in Aldermanbury, the sequestered

property of a cavalier nobleman, was bestowed upon him by the parliament; and Helen Milbourne, far removed from any chance or hope of seeing the only man for whom she had ever entertained the slightest affection, was placed at the head of a magnificent establishment, and compelled to play the courteous hostess, as mistress of her father's house, to men who were bent on the overthrow of everything which her natural sense of right, and above all, her love for Edward Dagworth, taught her to hold dear,—men, too, who mentioned the name of that distinguished partisan of loyalty, as he was now considered, with hostility, who panted for his blood, and had vowed his death either in the field or on the scaffold.

And from some of these she was compelled to listen to solicitations of marriage backed by paternal authority; and though she had hitherto been permitted to put a decided negative on all their pretensions, yet, with reason, she apprehended a time would come when she would be denied the privilege of refusing some abhorrent candidate for her hand. Her cheek lost its bloom, and her eye its brightness. Her father observed the change, and became anxious on account of her health.

"I want to breathe the fresh air and enjoy the quiet retirement of the country," she replied to his inquiry.

Her father took her to a seat purchased for the occasion in one of the beautiful villages near London; where he visited her every day, bringing home with him such of his political friends as he was desirous of uniting in still stronger bonds of fellowship with himself and family. This species of society was as distasteful to Helen as the London residence; and though her father employed every art and luxury that taste and ingenuity could suggest or wealth procure to adorn her new abode, his daughter still appeared listless and dissatisfied with all his arrangements; and when he asked her if she did not like it, she replied,—

"It is not Norfolk, and it is thither I wish to go—to our own house, where I was so free and happy."

"You are a foolish girl," her father rejoined, and left her in displeasure.

The next time he came to see her he brought one of the most eminent physicians of the day to visit her; who, as soon as he had conversed with the invalid, prescribed the very thing she required—Norfolk air.

Ralph Milbourne was out of humour. It was very inconvenient to him to leave London; but Helen was his only child, and had

been, of course, a spoiled child hitherto, invariably accustomed to the full indulgence of her will: so he agreed that she should follow it once more; and, much against his own inclination, conducted her to his Norfolk residence.

The very sight of the place put him into a fit of the spleen. It had not been inhabited for four years, and the country people had testified their affection to Sir Reginald Dagworth, and their dislike to him, by demolishing his windows and delapidating his ornamental buildings in his absence. The garden had become a wilderness; his park had almost degenerated into commonage; his fences and enclosures were all broken down; and, in short, everything bore evidence of the evil odour in which his memory had been held.

Even Helen felt uncomfortable at the aspect of the place, though she endeavoured to conceal the impression it created.

At that unhappy period of disorganisation and anarchy, it was no easy matter to procure efficient workmen to repair the damage that had been committed. Ralph Milbourne was precise and particular in all his habits; and since his re-entrance into public life he had acquired a taste for luxury and ease quite at variance with the state of his Norfolk mansion. He reproached his daughter for having been the means of bringing him to such a scene of discomfort—reviled his steward for having permitted his property to suffer such injury—execrated the Dagworths as the cause of it—and scolded his servants for their awkward attempts at repairing the mischief. As for Helen, she was patient and resigned; for she could see the grey towers of Dagworth Castle from the broken casements of her bedchamber, and she anticipated the possibility of beholding their future lord at some moment which she trusted was not remote.

After a week of angry excitement on the part of Mr. Commissioner Milbourne, of outward submission but inward resentment secretly treasured up against a day of retribution, on that of his dependents, and of quiescent endurance on that of his daughter, Ingworth New Hall, as his residence was called, was put into a habitable state; and effectual measures taken for repairing the gratuitous injuries that had been perpetrated in the grounds, gardens, and enclosures. Helen was not long in ascertaining that Sir Reginald Dagworth and his son were both absent from the neighbourhood, and Lady Alice and her servants were the only residents at the Castle—intelligence as satisfactory to her father as it was the reverse to her; for persisting in attributing all the damage his property had sustained to the

enmity of the old cavalier and his son, he said, "He could now safely return to London, since the Dagworths were absent, who were the only persons likely to molest his daughter in his absence."

The country appeared tolerably quiet; proper precautions had been taken to increase the securities of the house, and four resolute, well-armed male servants were deemed by Ralph Milbourne sufficient guard for his daughter during his temporary absence from her.

For two days after his departure everything remained in a state of tranquillity; but on the third night Helen was roused from feverish slumbers by the savage yells of the clubmen, a rustic but fierce banditti, composed for the most part of the unemployed population of the agricultural counties throughout England, who, deprived of regular work and wages by the ruin of many of their former masters, and the distracted state of the times, had been at length driven to the desperate expedient of obtaining a predatory livelihood by collecting in formidable bands for the purpose of levying contributions on passengers, plundering the unguarded villages or solitary mansions, and, in short, of committing every sort of outrage which opportunity might offer. To these were joined men who were inimical to both the great contending parties; reckless profligates, whose crimes had rendered them the outcasts of society; and ruined spendthrifts and unprincipled ruffians, whose tempers would not brook the restraints of anything in the shape of law or discipline.

The clubmen of that district, amounting to several hundred men, were headed by one of the latter class, who had conceived the daring project of besetting the house, and of carrying off the only daughter of the rich Parliamentary Commissioner Milbourne, for the sake of extorting a large sum of money for her ransom.

The plan was successful: the mansion was surprised and entered by the rude outlaws; and scarcely had the terrified Helen time to rise and wrap herself in a large cloak, which she hastily threw over her night-dress, when the sanctuary of her chamber was invaded by a heterogeneous band of desperadoes; the foremost of whom, with a coarse expression of admiration, seized her in his profane arms, and forcibly hurried her, in spite of her shrieks, entreaties, and resistance, into a covered carriage, which they had provided for the purpose of the abduction.

A single glance, even in the terror and confusion of that fearful moment, had been sufficient to convince Helen that they were

not cavaliers into whose power she had fallen; and the Roundheads would not, of course, have attacked the house of one of their own party. She then recalled to her remembrance many passages in the diurnals, where mention had been made of the clubmen, and of the outrages perpetrated by them. With an impulse of horror which no language can describe, at the idea of the probable fate that awaited her, she called on Edward Dagworth to save her, forgetting how many miles in all probability divided them; yet, strange to say, her cry was heard and answered by him whose name she had almost deliriously invoked.

He had been ordered by his commander on a secret service in that very neighbourhood, which, having successfully performed, he was on his way to join the army again, when he received intelligence of the intention of the clubmen to surprise the house of Ralph Milbourne, and carry off his daughter. He had therefore ambushed himself and his brave followers in a copse on the confines of the park, and Helen's agonising cry for help was his signal for attacking the ruffians.

The night was profoundly dark; but the red blaze from the New Hall, which the lawless miscreants, after plundering it, had fired, was sufficient to enable the cavaliers to discharge their petronels with deadly effect among the foremost of the clubmen, who were greatly superior in numbers to themselves; then rushing from their concealment with drawn swords, they assailed them so fiercely that the rabble-rout were panic-stricken, and after a disorderly attempt at maintaining their ground, fled precipitately in all directions.

Helen, on whose startled ear the discharge of firearms, the clash of swords, and the mingled yells of rage and vengeance had fallen in dread confusion, added a faint cry of female terror to the tumultuous din around her, and sank back in a state of utter insensibility. How long her swoon continued Helen knew not; but her first sensation of consciousness was a feeling that her peril was over, for she was supported in the arms and on the bosom of some person whose form was indistinct in the surrounding darkness, but whose voice of deep and tender melody, as he gently soothed her with assurances that she was safe, and all danger past, though it had never before met her ear, went to her heart like the remembered tones of some dear familiar friend.

"And where am I?" she asked.

"With friends, madam," was the reply of her unknown protector.

"What friends?" she eagerly demanded, as a sudden volume

of flame from the burning mansion threw a fitful radiance over the waving plumes and lovelocks of the cavaliers.

"With Colonel Dagworth and a part of his regiment," replied he on whose bosom she had hitherto so confidingly leaned.

"Colonel Dagworth!" she exclaimed. "Edward Dagworth, the son of Sir Reginald Dagworth, my father's enemy," continued she, gently struggling to disengage herself from his supporting arms; "is it indeed, to your generous valour that I am indebted for deliverance from a fate too terrible to think upon?"

She shuddered, and gave way to a convulsive burst of hysterical weeping; then raising her streaming eyes to his face, she murmured, "How shall we ever repay you?"

"I am repaid," he soothingly replied; "richly, nobly repaid, by the happiness I feel in having had it in my power to perform a service for Mistress Helen Milbourne."

What sweet words were these from the lips of the hero of her mental romance! Insensibly her eyes closed once more; and she was again supported on the manly bosom of her brave deliverer.

Meantime, Ingworth New Hall was blazing bright and far; a brisk wind was abroad, and, truth to tell, no efforts had been made for its preservation from the devouring element; so that, before Helen was sufficiently composed to give directions whither she should be removed, Colonel Dagworth had taken the resolution of conveying her to his own home, and placing her under his mother's protection.

Lady Alice received her fair charge with evident reluctance, but with all the outward courtesy and attention to her comforts that the circumstances of the case and the obligatory duties of hospitality required; but there was a haughtiness in her condescension that sufficiently indicated how much it cost her to exercise it towards the individual thus thrown upon her charity. Colonel Dagworth saw and felt it all more deeply than even the apprehensive and sensitive Helen; and being well aware, from his knowledge of his mother's peculiar disposition, that remonstrances from him would be perfectly useless, he endeavoured to compensate to Helen, whom he regarded as his own guest, by every graceful and delicate attention, for the coldness of her reluctant hostess. Insensibly his anxious solicitude for her comforts assumed a more tender and decided character; the incipient spark of youthful passion that had long lain dormant in his bosom was once more kindled, and finally fanned into

active existence by the more intimate knowledge, which personal intercourse afforded him, of the amiable qualities and intellectual endowments of her whose external charms had first captivated his youthful fancy. As for Helen, she was in a state of dreaming bliss, from which she dreaded every moment to be rudely awakened by a summons from her father. The coldness and *hauteur* of Lady Alice she regarded not; or if she did, she felt that its endurance was but a trifling counterbalance for the delight of being near him she loved, and of finding herself the object of his attentions, the cynosure of his ardent gaze.

Lady Alice was *his* mother, and she felt that from *his* mother she could have endured anything, and for her, she could have stooped to perform the most menial offices, without an idea of thereby incurring degradation. She studied her looks, she watched to anticipate her slightest wishes, and paid her the respectful homage of a dutiful and affectionate child.

Edward Dagworth possessed a mind to appreciate and understand the motives of Helen Milbourne for conduct so gratifying to himself; and too manly, too devoted in his love to trifle with the feelings of a heart like hers, he took an early opportunity of declaring himself to her; and Helen, the happy Helen, shamed not to acknowledge in return that he was, and ever had been, the object of her tenderest affections. The only obstacle to this unusual smooth course of true love was the apprehension that its consummation in the holy bands of wedlock would be opposed by their respective parents; and Helen assured him that the consent of his would and must be an indispensable preliminary to their union.

Edward Dagworth was an only and fondly-beloved child, and flattered himself with the hope that his hitherto unbounded influence with his mother might overcome her reluctance to his connecting himself with the daughter of one so distasteful to their principles as the Parliamentary Commissioner Milbourne. He erred in this supposition: Lady Alice's suppressed indignation at his undisguised attentions to her fair guest found bitter vent when he ventured to hint at the nature of his feelings towards her; and, after a torrent of angry and scornful invectives, she told him that when he had procured the consent of the old Roundhead usurer Milbourne, and the blessing of his own loyal and nobly-descended father, to such a union, then she would permit him to name the subject again to her.

"Agreed, madam," replied her son; and in the self-same hour, after exchanging a tender farewell with Helen, he com-

menced his journey to the headquarters of the royal army at Reading, where his father was; having previously despatched a letter by a trusty messenger to Ralph Milbourne, informing him of the safety of his daughter, and the state of their mutual sentiments.

The anxiety of Ralph Milbourne had reached its climax respecting the fate of his only, his beloved child, before this communication reached him; and had he learned that Helen was the wedded wife of the most impoverished gentleman in the royal army, his paternal feelings would have taught him to consider it a blessed alternative to the horrible fate of having become the victim of ruffians so abhorrent to both parties as the leaders of the clubmen.

All angry and bitter enmities towards the Dagworths appeared converted into sentiments of grateful acknowledgment and respect, when, two days after the receipt of Colonel Dagworth's letter, he presented himself at their Castle gate, to tender in person his consent to the marriage of his heiress with her preserver; which, advantageous as it now was in every worldly sense, he concluded was no less desired by the parents of the lover than by himself. As for the state of his daughter's feelings on the subject, a look, a single glance at her animated countenance and rapture-beaming eyes as she sprang to his arms, when he entered the drawing-room of Lady Alice Dagworth, was sufficient to convince him that his consent alone was required to make her the happiest of women. Her late peril had roused all the love of a fond parent in his heart, and, folding her lovely glowing form to his bosom, he whispered, "Fear nothing; you shall be the wife of your brave preserver, Helen."

Helen could not speak, but she wept her thanks on her father's neck; then, suddenly recollecting where she was, she wiped away the mingled tears that hung upon her fair cheek, and timidly presented the Parliamentary Commissioner to Lady Alice, as her father.

Lady Alice coldly and distantly acknowledged the profound obeisance of the disconcerted Milbourne; who was advancing with eager alacrity to salute her ladyship, when a single glance from her large majestic eyes had the effect of paralysing his motions, and silencing the compliments he was preparing to utter.

At that moment—that critical moment, and before the ungracious words which hung on the haughty lips of Lady Alice could be pronounced, the rapid sound of a horseman, riding as

if on life and death, was heard crossing the drawbridge of the Castle; and the next moment, Colonel Dagworth, with the red stains of recent battle on his array, and mired from spur to plume, rushed into the apartment.

"Mother!—sweet Helen!" he exclaimed, "I have been successful—joy with me—I am the happiest of men!"

"What now?" replied Lady Alice, haughtily rising from her seat; "what mean these stains upon your dress, Colonel Dagworth—are you wounded?"

"Nothing but a scratch not worth the caring for," he replied, "the loss of the precious minutes was all my uneasiness; and for the first time in my life I would rather not have done battle with the Roundheads, had I not been intercepted by an ambuscade of them about five miles off. I should have been with you three hours earlier, but they compelled me to tarry by the way till I had beaten them soundly, mother mine; and now, I am come to tell you the good news of that, and the still better intelligence, that I have obtained my father's full and free consent to take this lady to wife."

"Your father's consent!" echoed Lady Alice; "impossible! he would never so far forget himself."

"It is here under his own hand and seal, nevertheless," replied Colonel Dagworth, presenting his mother with a paper.

She received it with a compressed brow, read it with evident displeasure, and when she had concluded it, rent it into a thousand pieces, and scornfully setting her foot on the fragments, passionately exclaimed:

"Thus do I trample on the record of Sir Reginald Dagworth's weakness, and the base preliminary for an alliance with the blood of traitors——"

"And on the happiness of your only son, madam," retorted Colonel Dagworth bitterly, concluding the sentence; "of him whom you *say* you love, but the deadliest offices of hatred are kindness in comparison to the deliberate cruelty of conduct like yours."

"Helen," said the mortified parent to his daughter, who stood like one stunned and paralysed by this unexpected ebullition of Lady Alice's hostile feelings, "it is enough; I thought the sacrifice had been on our part, when I consented to bestow you and the uncounted thousands to which you are the sole heiress, on the penniless son of an impoverished family, and an adherent to a ruined cause withal; but you have been rejected, my girl, with contumely, which ought to teach you the folly of

desiring such unequal yoking; and now, Helen, return your thanks to this proud lady for the ungracious benefits she has conferred upon you, and let us begone from these walls for ever."

"Stay, Master Milbourne, for pity's sake.—Helen, will you thus abandon me?" exclaimed Colonel Dagworth. "My mother," added he, "must and shall apologise for her conduct; it is the warmth of party feeling, nothing else, believe me, and you must forgive her."

"Lady Alice is YOUR mother, Edward Dagworth," said Helen, "and from her I can forgive anything—even her assurance that I am unworthy of the honour of becoming your wife."

She curtsied with respectful dignity to both mother and son as she concluded, and, turning on the beloved of her heart the glance of tender farewell she could not trust her quivering lips to speak, passively yielded to the impulse of the paternal arm that led her from their mansion.

The recent conflagration at New Hall having left Ralph Milbourne without a Norfolk residence, and Helen still expressing a wish to remain in that county, he placed her with her Uncle Ireton's family, then occupying a spacious but dismal mansion in that neighbourhood, called Irmingland Hall. And there, in spite of danger and the precautions of her family to prevent these meetings, did the adventurous lover seek, and ofttimes succeed in obtaining, stolen interviews with his beloved; and in the last of these, that rupture took place between them which I have recorded in the commencement of my tale, and which left them both angry, but broken-hearted.

The fierce excitement of the perilous and active scenes in which he was engaged, and the increasing darkness that now overshadowed his cause, seemed at times to divert the thoughts of Colonel Dagworth from the regrets and sorrows of a love that nothing could obliterate; but Helen, in the deep retirement and unbroken gloom of Irmingland Hall, had no other employment for her thoughts than heart-corroding recollections of past happiness and wronged affection. From the haughty daughter of Cromwell, who had recently become the wife of her Uncle Ireton, she neither expected nor obtained sympathy for that oppressive anguish which preyed upon the springs of life. To this time brought no balm, but rather added a twofold cause of distress,—in the danger that threatened the still dear but estranged and distant object of her faithful affection; and in the uneasiness she endured in consequence of the solicitations of marriage which she now received from Sir Richard Warden,

one of the Parliamentary leaders, and the chosen friend of her Uncle Ireton, by whom his cause was warmly espoused. It was also earnestly backed by her father; and could she have forgotten Colonel Dagworth, it is possible she might have yielded to the pressing instances of those near relatives in favour of one to whom she could not deny her esteem, and who possessed everything to recommend him to the regard of any one who had affections to bestow.

The fall of Colchester at length took place, and the besiegers, enraged at the obstinacy of its brave defenders, had long vowed a signal vengeance against the most distinguished of these, among whom Colonel Dagworth might be justly reckoned. His father had fallen in one of the desperate sorties that had been attempted by the cavaliers; and to all the other causes of animosity existing against this brave loyalist, was the circumstance of his being the beloved of the wealthy heiress of Ralph Milbourne, the suspected obstacle that prevented her marriage with a powerful Roundhead partisan. His death was therefore resolved upon, both as a matter of public and private expediency, by the council assembled at Colchester, soon after the surrender of that last stronghold of loyalty.

Helen Milbourne had scarcely recovered from the horror with which the ungenerous massacre of Sir John Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas had inspired her, when Lady Alice Dagworth, attired in her weeds of recent widowhood, rushed into the apartment where, with pale cheeks and tearful eyes, she had just perused the diurnal which detailed the last scene of those ill-fated heroes, and flinging her arms wildly about her, exclaimed, with a frantic shriek, "Save my son!"

"Your son!" echoed Helen, looking fearfully upon Lady Alice, and scarcely appearing to comprehend the nature of the very peril which she had so much dreaded.

"Yes, yes, my son, my only one, Edward Dagworth! The barbarous traitors who have slain Lucas and Lisle have vowed his death—the death of my beautiful, my valiant son! You loved him once, Helen Milbourne, and you can save him, if you will."

Helen Milbourne, forgetful of past injury, insult, and scorn, clung to the bosom of Lady Alice with the fervent embrace of a child; and, mingling her tears with those with which the agonised mother was bedewing her features, sobbed out:

"Alas! Lady Alice, how can I save Colonel Dagworth—I who am so powerless?"

"You are not powerless—you are the daughter of Ralph Milbourne, the niece of Ireton. Through these men you can do everything. Oh, Helen, Helen! do not waste the precious moments in vain words, but remember the fate from which he saved you, and plead for him with those who will else be his murderers!"

Helen scarcely breathed till she found herself in the presence of her uncle, who was in deep consultation with her father and Sir Richard Warden, and, flinging herself at the feet of Ireton, she preferred her suit with hysterical sobs.—He listened to her in stern silence.—She turned to her father with clasped hands and streaming eyes, and exclaimed:

"Will you not speak, my father, one word, one little word, to preserve his life who rescued your child from a fate more dreadful than death?"

"It would be useless, Helen," he replied; "he is not my prisoner—it rests with your uncle Ireton."

"He is the captive of my bow and spear!" exclaimed Ireton. "I hold his death-warrant in my hand, which is directed to me for execution, but—you can ransom him, if you will." He glanced significantly at Sir Richard Warden, who stood, with folded arms, gazing intently upon the weeping supplicant. Helen shuddered, and looked imploringly at her father.

"There is no other alternative," observed Ralph Milbourne.

"None?" said Helen, turning to Ireton.

"None," he replied, "but your consenting to become the wife of the brave Sir Richard Warden; on which condition I will allow your hand to cancel the death-warrant of the malignant Edward Dagworth."

He held it towards her as he spoke. One glance upon that fatal instrument was sufficient to decide the wavering purpose of Helen Milbourne.

"He *shall* live!" she said, tearing the warrant as she spoke; "he will not be more lost to me than he is now, when I am the wife of another; and I—I—I shall have saved him. But," added she, turning once more to her uncle, "you must engage for his liberty as well."

"I will be your uncle's surety for that, madam," said Sir Richard Warden.

"And I must see him once more."

"To what purpose?" said her father.

She covered her face, and burst into a flood of tears.

Her affianced bridegroom took her cold hand, and led her to

an apartment barred and guarded, at the door of which, on the bare floor, with dishevelled hair, was seated Lady Alice Dagworth in her sable garments. She started from her recumbent posture, and, grasping Helen's arm with a convulsive pressure, gasped out, "My son! my son!"

"I have saved him," said Helen, in a broken voice.

"May the God of mercy bless and reward you, then," murmured Lady Alice, snatching her to her bosom with a wild burst of weeping.

At a sign from Sir Richard Warden, the bolts were withdrawn, and Helen Milbourne and her lost lover looked upon each other once more. His noble form was war-worn and attenuated by famine. Her cheek was faded by the canker-worm of sorrow, the lustre of her eyes had been dimmed by tears, and were still red and swollen from excessive weeping; in the impress of that unutterable woe which appeared imprinted on her agonised brow, Edward Dagworth read, as he supposed, his death doom. Coldness, anger, and pride were alike forgotten in each; and, fondly extending his fettered arms towards her, he exclaimed:

"And have you then come, my beloved, like an angel visitant, to my dreary prison-house, to bless me with one last look?'

"To look my last upon you, I am indeed come," she replied, "my Edward! Mine! do I say? Ay, mine; for I have purchased you with a price. You were, an hour ago, reckoned with the dead, but now are you living and free. Your life and liberty are my gift—go, and be happy; and when the green grass waves over the early grave of Dame Helen Warden (as I must soon be called), remember she died to save you from the fate of your brave companions in arms, Lisle and Lucas."

"And will you, dare you, wed this lady on such terms?" demanded Colonel Dagworth, turning sternly to Sir Richard Warden.

"No," he replied, "I'll none of her; take her—she is yours. I will bestow her upon you with my own hand at the marriage altar; and all I ask in return is, for you to bear me witness among your brother cavaliers, that you found one generous foe among the conquerors of Colchester."

DORATHEA

MRS. GORE

It may be
That I can aid thee.
Manfred. To do this, thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
BYRON.

I AM, as your conjectures have rightly assured you, of British origin; ay!—and in its highest degree—nobly born and nobly bred. There was a time, too, when flattering voices assured me that the blood of the Herberts spoke in my air, in my lofty brow, in my sternness of eye and lip; but since I have been a dweller in this land of exile, all consciousness of unavailing dignity has quailed into the drooping of despair. I dare not meet the searching eye of Heaven—why should I presume to brave the scrutiny of my fellow-men?—I have fallen beneath them; my glory has departed from me!

We were very young—my sister Dorathea and myself—when our mother died; leaving us to become the consolation of the kindest of fathers, the Lord Herbert of Wrocksley, a staunch and valued adherent to the falling cause of King James. I was scarcely ten years old when we stood together sobbing beside his knee in our black weeds; but little Dora was seven years my junior, and the innocent's smiles of infancy soon came shining through her tears. When our father bade me take her to me to be my child, and watch over her with a mother's heeding, I was proud of my charge,—and I loved her too; for Dora was then and ever the fairest and gentlest thing that could be moulded into a human form. My sweet, sweet sister!—how good and how fair she was!

My father willed not that we should too early encounter the enfeebling atmosphere of London. His own residence in the metropolis was that of a true courtier, arbitrary and repining; but his frequent visits to Wrocksley Court, where our childhood and youth were passed, enabled him to note with accuracy his children's development of strength and accomplishment: I will not say our *mental progress*, for the inborn faculties of the mind defy such transitory observation. The rashness of his confidence indeed, announced a deficiency either of penetration

or of opportunity. Unconscious of the despotic character of my disposition, he continued to place my little sister rather under my guidance than that of our common preceptress, Mistress Shirley, a weak and interested woman, in whose estimation my heirship to my father's lands, as well as my prematurity of talent, afforded me a most undue preference. Dora was timid, and somewhat feeble in constitution: her voice was low; her step tremulous; her eyes, when harshly addressed, instantly suffused with tears: but then her smiles were of the same quick prompting; and when she flung back the fair hair from her mild blue eyes, her looks had all the soothing promise of the rainbow. Yes! my sister was indeed holy and beautiful as the visible bond of a divine covenant.

I was just eighteen when my father, anxious for my appearance at court, even under the unpropitious aspect which it already began to wear, removed me by the most unnatural transition from the lonely seclusion of Wrocksley, to the brilliant orgies of Whitehall. Yet I was not dazzled by the novelty of my position. My haughtiness of heart rendered me superior to the influence of flattery; my innate pride preserved me from the weakness of vanity.

You will readily believe that, gifted with my advantages, and protected by the lavish favour of the king, I had many suitors. It was my destiny, however, to be addressed by those only whom I regarded with indifference—indifference, tempered in some instances by contempt; in others, by aversion. The Lady Miranda Herbert was spoken of, and written of, and sighed for, as the leading beauty of the court: she was adored, but it was with that love which is akin to hatred; her ungentle scornfulness was manifest even to her worshippers; nay, when the young Lord Lovell withdrew his suit from my harsh rejection, he was moved to exclaim in parting bitterness, "Miranda, the affection you despise will one day be avenged!" In my triumph I laughed his menaces to scorn; but, woe is me! they were not uttered in vain.

I can scarcely remember through what chance of society I first became acquainted with Sir Wilmot Worsley. There was nothing sufficiently striking in his appearance to have attracted my interest had he addressed me in the deferential terms to which I was accustomed; but while his appointment in the queen's household necessarily ensured our meeting at all the festivals of the court, I perceived that the personal charms so incessantly hymned in my ears were powerless to draw him

into the little circle of my votaries. In him my vanity encountered its first obstacle; and I was too much of a woman not to determine upon surmounting, at any cost, so determined an opposition. I conquered, too! but my victory was dearly bought. In the progress of my attempt, I became aware that the eyes I had seen fixed with coldness, or disapprobation, upon my own demeanour, were occasionally animated by the most varying and intellectual expression; that the address which had been directed so calmly, so regretfully to myself, was graced at other times by the most refined perfection of courtly breeding; that Worsley's low intense voice was in itself a captivating music; and that the words of its breathing were ineffaceable from the hearts of those to whom they were addressed with fervour. My hour, in short, was come; I loved him! and with the deeper and the purer interest, that I was long uncertain of the nature of his feelings towards me.

I was long in doubt, I repeat, of the character of Worsley's feelings; but it was the doubting of a woman's heart,—sanguine and restless, and varying with the alternate caprices of hope and confidence. He never, indeed, *said* that he loved me: but it was at *my* side he rode in the ring; it was *my* hand that he still claimed in the midnight masking; it was to commune with *me* only that he lingered, when the royal barges swept by moonlight over the Thames during the summer nights. It is true that he was often abstracted and inattentive; but the scattered words of his lips came tempered with a grace and an interest unknown to the flippant loquacity of others.

Meanwhile, the state of public affairs wholly withdrew my father's observation from myself and my attachments; and even when he addressed Sir Wilmot, their conversation turned upon the intrigues of the Protestant faction, or the unpopular and unfeeling pertinacity of the queen. For myself, engrossed by the influence of a new feeling, I remained wholly and strangely unconscious of the critical position of my native country; and throughout the extent of England, there probably existed not a person upon whom the final blow of the Revolution fell with a more startling abruptness than myself,—under whose very eyes the wires had been affixed to its state puppets.

My father hesitated not to follow the fortunes of a prince whose errors he deplored; but to whom, although himself of the Reformed Church, he felt his loyalty devoted beyond the intervention of sectarian zeal. And I, even if Sir Wilmot Worsley had not been destined to share the exile of his king—

how cheerfully, how rejoicingly, would I have accompanied my indulgent and partial parent to his retreat at St. Germain's. But in Lord Herbert's opposition to my entreaties for permission to share his flight, he was for the first time absolute. He bade me return to Wrocksley, and become a protectress to his orphan Dorathea, trusting to better times for our reunion. He cared not, he said, that his daughters should be apportioned as the prize of some needy papist; he chose that *we* at least should remain true to our country and its established creed; and, placing us audibly under the protection and the blessing of Heaven, Lord Herbert departed with his master; thus abandoning his private for his public duties. Verily he had his reward!

Even as my father's resolve had decreed, I returned to that home wherein Dora had been sporting away her happy hours of childhood; I returned, and oh! with how changed a spirit! At once refined and humiliated—elevated and degraded—I was touched, as by a wizard's wand, into the tenderest and sweetest charities of womanhood. My look, my voice, my bearing were no longer the same: like the statue of the ancient sculptor, my obduracy was softened by the soul within;—I loved!—and with the doubting of a humbled heart.

Had I been assured of Worsley's affection,—had we parted in the plighted confidence of lovers,—such was my trust in his nobleness of heart and hand, that during his absence I should not have endured one single uneasy hour. But it was not so. His attentions had been but those of a friend and a brother; he was deeply involved in the disastrous troubles of the times; he was gone forth into voluntary exile,—and how might the recollection of Miranda prevail against the active interests in which his feelings and his fortunes were now engaged? He might forget me—perhaps had already forgotten me!—and I—there was not an opinion—a word—a look of his that I did not treasure within my heart of hearts. The echoes of his voice,—I seemed to hear them in my solitude; the fastidious delicacy of his principles, which had rendered so many things worthless in my sight; the cold, but high-bred elegance of his demeanour,—all haunted my remembrance, till I scorned myself for such abject worship of one who had given me no right to make him the god of my idolatry. I scorned myself; yet still I went on loving as before!

I had none to whom I could disclose the conflict in my mind. I have said that our preceptress was a weak and frivolous

woman; and Dorathea was yet too much of a child to be entrusted with my secret. I should have regarded it as pollution to breathe the name of love in ears so pure and so unsuspecting as hers.

Meanwhile the time passed on. Years were added to years, and still my father was detained in exile; and while I devoted my solitary hours to the care and maintenance of his estate, as well as to the perfecting of Dorathea's education, my youth ebbed imperceptibly away; and, absorbed by an engrossing interest, I remained unconscious of the gradual decay of my beauty. I knew that I had improved in every quality sanctified by Worsley's approbation; that I had cultivated each gift and each virtue of his choice; and as to mere personal loveliness, he had seemed to hold it so lightly that I had long become indifferent to its possession.

But although my father's peculiar position, as well as my own inclinations, determined me to remain buried in the strict seclusion of Wrocksley Court, I own I was gratified by an opportunity afforded, through the kindness of a near relation of my deceased mother, to acquaint my young sister in some slight measure with the diversions of the capital; and scarcely had she departed for London, leaving me to dream away my solitude during her absence, when one evening,—one calm, fragrant, balmy spring evening,—I saw a stranger of noble and familiar aspect advancing along the green alley leading to my garden bower, and in another moment Worsley himself was beside me. The beating of my heart had not misled my expectations. He was the bearer of a letter from my father, authorising him to become our inmate. " Mistress Shirley's protection," wrote Lord Herbert, " will be a sanction to Wilmot's temporary residence at Wrocksley, inasmuch as he is already my son by adoption and affection,—a tie I trust to see eventually confirmed by his marriage with a beloved daughter." With my father's letter in my bosom, and Worsley at my side, judge whether I was happy! judge whether the soul-sickness of those long years of absence was repaid!

I could not but observe that Sir Wilmot was duly sensible of the alteration which time, and the chastening of sorrow, had wrought in my disposition; that he regarded me with something of an exulting tenderness, as if conscious of having been instrumental in the change. Nor did my amended prospects and actual happiness tend to recloud my brow, or chill my frank, joyous, yet subdued demeanour. There was not one

jarring thought within my mind, one discordant feeling within my heart, as day after day I sat by Worsley's side beneath the green and shadowy shelter of the Wrocksley beechwoods, listening to his prolonged details of the exiled court, or claiming his interest, in turn, for my descriptions of Dora's innocent beauty and elegance of mind, or my eager anticipation of my father's speedy and prosperous return.

One evening, succeeding by many weeks his arrival, while the saloon in which we were sitting was obscured by the creeping summer twilight, and we were indulging in that happy interchange of thought and feeling which summer and twilight render so intimately and sacredly confidential, occasionally interrupting ourselves by a few faint chords of the lute that lay upon my knee, the door of the chamber suddenly flew open, and Dorathea stole into my arms. I started at the sound of her sweet voice,—and so did Worsley, who was seated by my side; but when, beneath the officious lights which were now introduced into the gloomy apartment, Dora's sylph-like, and pure and tranquil beauty became revealed, he was motionless with delighted surprise. At the first glance I enjoyed his emotion; at the second, an abyss of horror and agony seemed opening at my feet! Amid all the varying expressions I had heretofore recognised on his mutable countenance, I had never detected the rapt, the luxurious ecstasy of admiration which now thrilled from his eyes, and streamed upon his cheek. My future destiny seemed written there in characters of fire.

I seized the first pretext to escape into my own chamber—to rush with frenzied haste to the tiring-mirror on my toilet, and lo! I beheld myself for the first time reflected in the terrible portraiture of truth! Distorted by passion, bewildered by terror, I saw each altered feature withering under the touch of time and prolonged anxiety. I saw my youth faded by the tears I had shed—*for him*. I saw my quivering lips blanched by the anticipations of those which yet awaited me; while a still small voice reiterated in my ears, "He will forsake thee, Miranda! he will forsake thee!" Oh that I could have recalled my youth, and its disregarded beauty! Oh that I could have laid down my head and died, in a renewal of the blessed self-deception preceding Dora's return!

I will not—I cannot detail the minute progress and justifications of my suspicions; the gradual estrangement of Worsley's affection from myself, and the visible growth of his new passion. To feel the relaxing pressure of his hand, to mark the chilling

calmness of his altered eye, to hear the unwitting change of his endearing expressions, had been comparatively easy of endurance. But it was my destined trial to behold each treasured token of tenderness successively transferred to another; to hear his intonation soften as he addressed my sister; to know his alienated looks of love fixed in rapturous admiration upon her every movement; and in time I was fated to note the fond and confiding self-abandonment with which Dorathea repaid his devotion. I could not even forewarn her of my wretchedness, or upbraid her with treachery; for how would it have served me to proclaim that man *my* lover, whom she had only known as —her own! No; I resigned myself to my calamity; I presumed not to wrestle with the influence of such perfection of youthful loveliness; I even imparted new graces to the mild lustre of its sweetness, by the contrast of my own sullen or agonised countenance. I resigned myself, but not unrepiningly. New and dreadful emotions seemed wakening within me, and I shuddered to contemplate the darkness of the mysterious caverns which were revealed to me within the innermost depths of my heart. I shuddered, for I scarcely yet knew what demons might be sheltered there!

I cannot but believe that Sir Wilmot Worsley was conscious and apprehensive of the dreadful struggle of passion within my bosom. Yet it was an abject weakness on his part to flee precipitately as he did from Wrocksley; so mighty was his influence, that had he spoken and pleaded and appealed to the native generosity of my heart, methinks I might have subdued my feelings into patience, under the sustaining excitement of conscious well-doing. But he fled, leaving my sister—*my victim* —at my merciless disposal. I knew not that he was gone to pray my father's interference; but I *did* know that he had already pleaded his cause, and not in vain, in Dora's ears; for in her gentle candour she told me all,—that she loved him, that he was hers, her own, her affianced. O mighty Heaven! how fervent in that hour was my praver for deliverance from evil; even from the evil-prompting of my secret soul!

And then came letters and tokens, with which the frenzy of my jealousy urged me to augment my tortures. I read them— I gazed upon them,—the picture, and the braided hair, and the written records of his love! I pressed them to my burning brain, my withered heart; and I thought of my wasted youth, and of my lonely age, till my soul grew dark and swollen with contending passions. And again and again I prayed that heavenly

interposition would deliver me from evil! But Heaven withheld its aid, and I grew mad with the rampant wickedness of a sinful human nature; and I cursed my innocent sister, and reviled her, and smote her, and held her in stern durance, lest she should communicate my cruel dealing to—*to him*! And lo! one day, when, with impatient fury, I had caused her hands to be bound and her steps restrained, that she might not escape me, a stern interposing voice sounded in my ears, and my father, grey-headed and awful, stood beside us!

He demanded, with solemn utterance, wherefore I had so harshly dealt with his youngest born? And the tears stole down his venerable face as he took his dagger from its sheath, and severed the cords which bound my weeping, trembling, rescued sister. And I saw that *his* heart, too, was in her cause, that I had lost all, that I was alone on earth; and an evil instigation, a demon's suggestion, put words of horror into my mouth. I told him that his Dorathea had turned unto shame; that his child had become a castaway; that my sister was the minion of Worsley's illicit love!

The dagger was in his hand, and in his soul the pride of six centuries of unsoiled honour. It was but a blow! In a moment the sprinkling of her innocent blood was upon me—*the baptism of my eternal condemnation!*

Spare me, spare me your consolations, they are unavailing to a sorrow such as mine!

GRIZEL COCHRANE

A TALE OF TWEEDMOUTH MUIR

J. M. WILSON

When the tyranny and bigotry of the last James drove his subjects to take up arms against him, one of the most formidable enemies to his dangerous usurpations was Sir John Cochrane, ancestor of the present Earl of Dundonald. He was one of the most prominent actors in Argyle's rebellion, and for ages a destructive doom seemed to have hung over the house of Campbell, enveloping in a common ruin all who united their fortunes to the cause of its chieftains. The same doom encompassed Sir John Cochrane. He was surrounded by the

king's troops—long, deadly, and desperate was his resistance, but at length, overpowered by numbers, he was taken prisoner; tried, and condemned to die upon the scaffold. He had but a few days to live, and his jailer waited but the arrival of his death-warrant to lead him forth to execution. His family and his friends had visited him in prison, and exchanged with him the last, the long, the heart-yearning farewell. But there was one who came not with the rest to receive his blessing—one who was the pride of his eyes, and of his house—even Grizel, the daughter of his love. Twilight was casting a deeper gloom over the gratings of his prison-house, he was mourning for a last look of his favourite child, and his head was pressed against the cold damp walls of his cell, to cool the feverish pulsations that shot through it like stings of fire, when the door of his apartment turned slowly on its unwilling hinges, and his keeper entered, followed by a young and beautiful lady. Her person was tall and commanding, her eyes dark, bright, and tearless; but their very brightness spoke of sorrow—of sorrow too deep to be wept away; and her raven tresses were parted over an open brow, clear and pure as the polished marble. The unhappy captive raised his head as they entered—

"My child! my own Grizel!" he exclaimed, and she fell upon his bosom.

"My father! my dear father!" sobbed the miserable maiden, and she dashed away the tear that accompanied the words.

"Your interview must be short—very short," said the jailer, as he turned and left them for a few minutes together.

"God help and comfort thee, my daughter!" added the unhappy father, as he held her to his breast, and printed a kiss upon her brow. "I had feared that I should die without bestowing my blessing on the head of my own child, and that stung me more than death. But thou art come, my love—thou art come! and the last blessing of thy wretched father——"

"Nay! forbear! forbear!" she exclaimed; "not thy last blessing!—not thy last! My father shall not die!"

"Be calm! be calm, my child!" returned he; "would to Heaven that I could comfort thee!—my own! my own! But there is no hope—within three days, and thou and all my little ones will be——"

Fatherless—he would have said, but the words died on his tongue.

"Three days!" repeated she, raising her head from his breast, but eagerly pressing his hand—"three days!" Then there *is*

hope—my father *shall* live! Is not my grandfather the friend of Father Petre, the confessor and the master of the king? From him he shall beg the life of his son, and my father shall not die."

"Nay! nay, my Grizel," returned he; "be not deceived—there is no hope—already my doom is sealed—already the king has signed the order for my execution, and the messenger of death is now on the way."

"Yet my father SHALL not!—SHALL not die! she repeated, emphatically, and, clasping her hands together. "Heaven speed a daughter's purpose!" she exclaimed; and, turning her father, said, calmly—"We part now, but we shall meet again."

"What would my child?" inquired he eagerly, gazing anxiously on her face.

"Ask not now," she replied, "my father—ask not now; but pray for me and bless me—but not with thy *last* blessing."

He again pressed her to his heart, and wept upon her neck. In a few moments the jailer entered, and they were torn from the arms of each other.

On the evening of the second day after the interview we have mentioned, a wayfaring man crossed the drawbridge at Berwick, from the north, and proceeding down Marygate, sat down to rest upon a bench by the door of an hostelry on the south side of the street, nearly fronting where what was called the "Main-guard" then stood. He did not enter the inn; for it was above his apparent condition, being that which Oliver Cromwell had made his head-quarters a few years before, and where, at a somewhat earlier period, James the Sixth had taken up his residence when on his way to enter on the sovereignty of England. The traveller wore a coarse jerkin fastened round his body by a leathern girdle, and over it a short cloak, composed of equally plain materials. He was evidently a young man; but his beaver was drawn down, so as almost to conceal his features. In the one hand he carried a small bundle, and in the other a pilgrim's staff. Having called for a glass of wine, he took a crust of bread from his bundle, and, after resting for a few minutes, rose to depart. The shades of night were setting in, and it threatened to be a night of storms. The heavens were gathering black, the clouds rushing from the sea, sudden gusts of wind were moaning along the streets, accompanied by heavy drops of rain, and the face of the Tweed was troubled.

"Heaven help thee, if thou intendest to travel far in such

a night as this!" said the sentinel at the English gate, as the traveller passed him and proceeded to cross the bridge.

In a few minutes, he was upon the borders of the wide, desolate, and dreary muir of Tweedmouth, which, for miles, presented a desert of whins, fern, and stunted heath, with here and there a dingle covered with thick brushwood. He slowly toiled over the steep hill, braving the storm, which now raged in wildest fury. The rain fell in torrents, and the wind howled as a legion of famished wolves, hurling its doleful and angry echoes over the heath. Still the stranger pushed onward, until he had proceeded about two or three miles from Berwick, when, as if unable longer to brave the storm, he sought shelter amidst some crab and bramble bushes by the wayside. Nearly an hour had passed since he sought this imperfect refuge, and the darkness of the night and the storm had increased together, when the sound of a horse's feet was heard, hurriedly plashing along the road. The rider bent his head to the blast. Suddenly his horse was grasped by the bridle, the rider raised his head, and the traveller stood before him, holding a pistol to his breast.

"Dismount!" cried the stranger, sternly.

The horseman, benumbed, and stricken with fear, made an effort to reach his arms; but, in a moment, the hand of the robber, quitting the bridle, grasped the breast of the rider, and dragged him to the ground. He fell heavily on his face, and for several minutes remained senseless. The stranger seized the leathern bag which contained the mail for the north, and flinging it on his shoulder, rushed across the heath.

Early on the following morning, the inhabitants of Berwick were seen hurrying in groups to the spot where the robbery had been committed, and were scattered in every direction around the muir, but no trace of the robber could be obtained.

Three days had passed, and Sir John Cochrane yet lived. The mail which contained his death-warrant had been robbed; and, before another order for his execution could be given, the intercession of his father, the Earl of Dundonald, with the king's confessor, might be successful. Grizel now became almost his constant companion in prison, and spoke to him words of comfort. Nearly fourteen days had passed since the robbery of the mail had been committed, and protracted hope in the bosom of the prisoner became more bitter than his first despair. But even that hope, bitter as it was, perished. The intercession of his father had been unsuccessful—and a second time the bigoted and would-be despotic monarch had signed the warrant

for his death, and within little more than another day that warrant would reach his prison.

"The will of Heaven be done!" groaned the captive.

"Amen!" returned Grizel, with wild vehemence; "but my father *shall* not die!"

Again the rider with the mail had reached the muir of Tweedmouth, and a second time he bore with him the doom of Cochrane. He spurred his horse to its utmost speed, he looked cautiously before, behind, and around him; and in his right hand he carried a pistol ready to defend himself. The moon shed a ghostly light across the heath, rendering desolation visible, and giving a spiritual embodiment to every shrub. He was turning the angle of a straggling copse, when his horse reared at the report of a pistol, the fire of which seemed to dash into its very eyes. At the same moment, his own pistol flashed, and the horse rearing more violently, he was driven from the saddle. In a moment, the foot of the robber was upon his breast, who, bending over him, and brandishing a short dagger in his hand, said:

"Give me thine arms, or die!"

The heart of the king's servant failed within him, and, without venturing to reply, he did as he was commanded.

"Now, go thy way," said the robber, sternly, "but leave with me the horse, and leave with me the mail—lest a worse thing come upon thee."

The man therefore arose, and proceeded towards Berwick, trembling; and the robber, mounting the horse which he had left, rode rapidly across the heath.

Preparations were making for the execution of Sir John Cochrane, and the officers of the law waited only for the arrival of the mail with his second death-warrant, to lead him forth to the scaffold, when the tidings arrived that the mail had again been robbed. For yet fourteen days, and the life of the prisoner would be again prolonged. He again fell on the neck of his daughter, and wept, and said:

"It is good—the hand of Heaven is in this!"

"Said I not," replied the maiden—and for the first time she wept aloud—"that my father should not die."

The fourteen days were not yet past, when the prison-doors flew open, and the old Earl of Dundonald rushed to the arms of his son. His intercession with the confessor had been at length successful; and, after twice signing the warrant for the execution of Sir John, which had as often failed in reaching

its destination, the king had sealed his pardon. He had hurried with his father from the prison to his own house—his family were clinging around him shedding tears of joy—and they were marvelling with gratitude at the mysterious providence that had twice intercepted the mail, and saved his life, when a stranger craved an audience. Sir John desired him to be admitted—and the robber entered. He was habited, as we have before described, with the coarse cloak and coarser jerkin; but his bearing was above his condition. On entering, he slightly touched his beaver, but remained covered.

"When you have perused these," said he, taking two papers from his bosom, "cast them into the fire!"

Sir John glanced on them, started, and became pale—they were his death-warrants.

"My deliverer," exclaimed he, "how shall I thank thee—how repay the saviour of my life! My father—my children—thank him for me!"

The old earl grasped the hand of the stranger; the children embraced his knees; and he burst into tears.

"By what name," eagerly inquired Sir John, "shall I thank my deliverer?"

The stranger wept aloud; and raising his beaver, the raven tresses of Grizel Cochrane fell upon the coarse cloak.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the astonished and enraptured father—"my own child!—my saviour!—my own Grizel!"

It is unnecessary to add more—the imagination of the reader can supply the rest; and, we may only add, that Grizel Cochrane, whose heroism and noble affection we have here hurriedly and imperfectly sketched, was, tradition says, the grandmother of the late Sir John Stuart of Allanbank, and great-great-grandmother of Mr. Coutts, the celebrated banker.[1]

[1] Since the author of the *Tales of the Borders* first published the tale of "Grizel Cochrane," a slightly different version of it appeared in *Chambers' Journal*. There is no reason to doubt the fact of her heroism; but we believe it is incorrect, as is generally affirmed, so say that she was the grandmother of the late Sir John Stuart of Allanbank. We may state that the author of these tales received a letter from Sir Hugh Stuart, son of Sir John referred to, stating that his family would be glad to have such a heroine as Grizel connected with their genealogy, but that they were unable to prove such connection.

THE OLD MAN'S TALE ABOUT THE QUEER CLIENT

CHARLES DICKENS

"It matters little," said the old man, "where, or how, I picked up this brief history. If I were to relate it in the order in which it reached me, I should commence in the middle, and when I had arrived at the conclusion, go back for a beginning. It is enough for me to say that some of its circumstances passed before my own eyes. For the remainder I know them to have happened, and there are some persons yet living, who will remember them but too well.

"In the Borough High Street, near St. George's Church, and on the same side of the way, stands, as most people know, the smallest of our debtors' prisons, the Marshalsea. Although in later times it has been a very different place from the sink of filth and dirt it once was, even its improved condition holds out but little temptation to the extravagant, or consolation to the provident. The condemned felon has as good a yard for air and exercise in Newgate, as the insolvent debtor in the Marshalsea Prison.

"It may be my fancy, or it may be that I cannot separate the place from the old recollections associated with it, but this part of London I cannot bear. The street is broad, the shops are spacious, the noise of passing vehicles, the footsteps of a perpetual stream of people—all the busy sounds of traffic, resound in it from morn to midnight, but the streets around are mean and close; poverty and debauchery lie festering in the crowded alleys; want and misfortune are pent up in the narrow prison; an air of gloom and dreariness seems, in my eyes at least, to hang about the scene, and to impart to it a squalid and sickly hue.

"Many eyes, that have long since been closed in the grave, have looked round upon that scene lightly enough, when entering the gate of the old Marshalsea Prison for the first time: for despair seldom comes with the first severe shock of misfortune. A man has confidence in untried friends, he remembers the many offers of service so freely made by his boon companions when he wanted them not; he has hope—the hope

of happy inexperience—and however he may bend beneath the first shock, it springs up in his bosom, and flourishes there for a brief space, until it droops beneath the blight of disappointment and neglect. How soon have those same eyes, deeply sunken in the head, glared from faces wasted with famine, and sallow from confinement, in days when it was no figure of speech to say that debtors rotted in prison, with no hope of release, and no prospect of liberty! The atrocity in its full extent no longer exists, but there is enough of it left to give rise to occurrences that make the heart bleed.

"Twenty years ago, that pavement was worn with the footsteps of a mother and child, who, day by day, so surely as the morning came, presented themselves at the prison gate; often, after a night of restless misery and anxious thoughts, were they there, a full hour too soon, and then the young mother turning meekly away, would lead the child to the old bridge, and raising him in her arms to show him the glistening water, tinted with the light of the morning's sun, and stirring with all the bustling preparations for business and pleasure that the river presented at that early hour, endeavour to interest his thoughts in the objects before him. But she would quickly set him down, and, hiding her face in her shawl, give vent to the tears that blinded her; for no expression of interest or amusement lighted up his thin and sickly face. His recollections were few enough, but they were all of one kind: all connected with the poverty and misery of his parents. Hour after hour had he sat on his mother's knee, and with childish sympathy watched the tears that stole down her face, and then crept quietly away into some dark corner, and sobbed himself to sleep. The hard realities of the world, with many of its worst privations—hunger and thirst, and cold and want—had all come home to him, from the first dawnings of reason; and though the form of childhood was there, its light heart, its merry laugh, and sparkling eyes, were wanting.

"The father and mother looked on upon this, and upon each other, with thoughts of agony they dared not breathe in words. The healthy, strong-made man, who could have borne almost any fatigue of active exertion, was wasting beneath the close confinement and unhealthy atmosphere of a crowded prison. The slight and delicate woman was sinking beneath the combined effects of bodily and mental illness. The child's young heart was breaking.

"Winter came, and with it weeks of cold and heavy rain.

The poor girl had removed to a wretched apartment close to the spot of her husband's imprisonment; and though the change had been rendered necessary by their increasing poverty, she was happier now, for she was nearer him. For two months, she and her little companion watched the opening of the gate as usual. One day she failed to come, for the first time. Another morning arrived, and she came alone. The child was dead.

"They little know, who coldly talk of the poor man's bereavements, as a happy release from pain to the departed, and a merciful relief from expense to the survivor—they little know, I say, what the agony of those bereavements is. A silent look of affection and regard when all other eyes are turned coldly away—the consciousness that we possess the sympathy and affection of one being when all others have deserted us—is a hold, a stay, a comfort, in the deepest affliction, which no wealth could purchase, or power bestow. The child had sat at his parents' feet for hours together, with his little hands patiently folded in each other, and his thin wan face raised towards them. They had seen him pine away, from day to day; and though his brief existence had been a joyless one, and he was now removed to that peace and rest which, child as he was, he had never known in this world, they were his parents, and his loss sunk deep into their souls.

"It was plain to those who looked upon the mother's altered face, that death must soon close the scene of her adversity and trial. Her husband's fellow-prisoners shrank from obtruding on his grief and misery, and left to himself alone the small room he had previously occupied in common with two companions. She shared it with him: and lingering on without pain, but without hope, her life ebbed slowly away.

"She had fainted one evening in her husband's arms, and he had borne her to the open window, to revive her with the air, when the light of the moon falling full upon her face, showed him a change upon her features, which made him stagger beneath her weight, like a helpless infant.

"'Set me down, George,' she said faintly. He did so, and seating himself beside her, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

"'It is very hard to leave you, George,' she said, 'but it is God's will, and you must bear it for my sake. Oh! how I thank Him for having taken our boy! He is happy, and in Heaven now. What would he have done here, without his mother!'

"'You shall not die, Mary, you shall not die!' said the

husband, starting up. He paced hurriedly to and fro, striking his head with his clenched fists; then reseating himself beside her, and supporting her in his arms, added more calmly, 'Rouse yourself, my dear girl. Pray, pray do. You will revive yet.'

"'Never again, George; never again,' said the dying woman. 'Let them lay me by my poor boy now, but promise me that if ever you leave this dreadful place, and should grow rich, you will have us removed to some quiet country churchyard, a long, long way off—very far from here—where we can rest in peace. Dear George, promise me you will.'

"'I do, I do,' said the man, throwing himself passionately on his knees before her. Speak to me, Mary, another word; one look—but one!'

"He ceased to speak: for the arm that clasped his neck, grew stiff and heavy. A deep sigh escaped from the wasted form before him; the lips moved, and a smile played upon the face; but the lips were pallid, and the smile faded into a rigid and ghastly stare. He was alone in the world.

"That night, in the silence and desolation of his miserable room, the wretched man knelt down by the dead body of his wife, and called on God to witness a terrible oath, that from that hour, he devoted himself to revenge her death and that of his child; that thenceforth to the last moment of his life, his whole energies should be directed to this one object; that his revenge should be protracted and terrible; that his hatred should be undying and inextinguishable; and should hunt its object through the world.

"The deepest despair, and passion scarcely human, had made such fierce ravages on his face and form, in that one night, that his companions in misfortune shrunk affrighted from him as he passed by. His eyes were bloodshot and heavy, his face a deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had bitten his under lip nearly through in the violence of his mental suffering, and the blood which had flowed from the wound had trickled down his chin, and stained his shirt and neckerchief. No tear, or sound of complaint escaped him: but the unsettled look, and disordered haste with which he paced up and down the yard, denoted the fever which was burning within.

"It was necessary that his wife's body should be removed from the prison, without delay. He received the communication with perfect calmness, and acquiesced in its propriety. Nearly all the inmates of the prison had assembled to witness its removal; they fell back on either side when the widower

appeared; he walked hurriedly forward, and stationed himself, alone, in a little railed area close to the lodge gate, from whence the crowd, with an instinctive feeling of delicacy, had retired. The rude coffin was borne slowly forward on men's shoulders. A dead silence pervaded the throng, broken only by the audible lamentations of the women, and the shuffling steps of the bearers on the stone pavement. They reached the spot where the bereaved husband stood: and stopped. He laid his hand upon the coffin, and mechanically adjusting the pall with which it was covered, motioned them onward. The turnkeys in the prison lobby took off their hats as it passed through, and in another moment the heavy gate closed behind it. He looked vacantly upon the crowd, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Although for many weeks after this, he was watched, night and day, in the wildest ravings of fever, neither the consciousness of his loss, nor the recollection of the vow he had made, ever left him for a moment. Scenes changed before his eyes, place succeeded place, and event followed event, in all the hurry of delirium; but they were all connected in some way with the great object of his mind. He was sailing over a boundless expanse of sea, with a blood-red sky above, and the angry waters, lashed into fury beneath, boiling and eddying up, on every side. There was another vessel before them, toiling and labouring in the howling storm: her canvas fluttering in ribbons from the mast, and her deck thronged with figures who were lashed to the sides, over which huge waves every instant burst, sweeping away some devoted creatures into the foaming sea. Onward they bore, amidst the roaring mass of water, with a speed and force which nothing could resist; and striking the stern of the foremost vessel, crushed her, beneath their keel. From the huge whirlpool which the sinking wreck occasioned, arose a shriek so loud and shrill—the death-cry of a hundred drowning creatures, blended into one fierce yell—that it rung far above the war-cry of the elements, and echoed, and re-echoed till it seemed to pierce air, sky, and ocean. But what was that—that old grey head that rose above the water's surface, and with looks of agony, and screams for aid, buffeted with the waves! One look, and he had sprung from the vessel's side, and with vigorous strokes was swimming towards it. He reached it; he was close upon it. They were *his* features. The old man saw him coming, and vainly strove to elude his grasp. But he clasped him tight, and dragged him beneath the water. Down, down with him, fifty fathoms down; his struggles grew

fainter and fainter, until they wholly ceased. He was dead; he had killed him, and had kept his oath.

"He was traversing the scorching sands of a mighty desert, barefooted and alone. The sand choked and blinded him; its fine thin grains entered the very pores of his skin, and irritated him almost to madness. Gigantic masses of the same material, carried forward by the wind, and shone through, by the burning sun, stalked in the distance like pillars of living fire. The bones of men, who had perished in the dreary waste, lay scattered at his feet; a fearful light fell on everything around; so far as the eye could reach, nothing but objects of dread and horror presented themselves. Vainly striving to utter a cry of terror, with his tongue cleaving to his mouth, he rushed madly forward. Armed with supernatural strength, he waded through the sand, until exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he fell senseless on the earth. What fragrant coolness revived him; what gushing sound was that? Water! It was indeed a well; and the clear fresh stream was running at his feet. He drank deeply of it, and throwing his aching limbs upon the bank, sunk into a delicious trance. The sound of approaching footsteps aroused him. An old grey-headed man tottered forward to slake his burning thirst. It was *he* again! He wound his arms round the old man's body, and held him back. He struggled, and shrieked for water, for but one drop of water to save his life! But he held the old man firmly, and watched his agonies with greedy eyes; and when his lifeless head fell forward on his bosom, he rolled the corpse from him with his feet.

"When the fever left him, and consciousness returned, he awoke to find himself rich and free: to hear that the parent who would have let him die in gaol—*would!* who *had* let those who were far dearer to him than his own existence, die of want and sickness of heart that medicine cannot cure—had been found dead on his bed of down. He had had all the heart to leave his son a beggar, but proud even of his health and strength, had put off the act till it was too late, and now might gnash his teeth in the other world, at the thought of the wealth his remissness had left him. He awoke to this, and he awoke to more. To recollect the purpose for which he lived, and to remember that his enemy was his wife's own father—the man who had cast him into prison, and who, when his daughter and her child sued at his feet for mercy, had spurned him from his door. Oh, how he cursed the weakness that prevented him from being up, and active, in his scheme of vengeance!

"He caused himself to be carried from the scene of his loss and misery, and conveyed to a quiet residence on the sea coast; not in the hope of recovering his peace of mind or happiness, for both were fled for ever; but to restore his prostrate energies, and meditate on his darling object. And here, some evil spirit cast in his way the opportunity for his first, most horrible revenge.

"It was summer-time; and wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, he would issue from his solitary lodgings early in the evening, and wandering along a narrow path beneath the cliffs, to a wild and lonely spot that had struck his fancy in his ramblings, seat himself on some fallen fragment of the rock, and burying his face in his hands, remain there for hours—sometimes until night had completely closed in, and the long shadows of the frowning cliffs above his head cast a thick black darkness on every object near him.

"He was seated here, one calm evening, in his old position, now and then raising his head to watch the flight of a sea-gull, or carry his eye along the glorious crimson path, which, commencing in the middle of the ocean, seemed to lead to its very verge where the sun was setting, when the profound stillness of the spot was broken by a loud cry for help; he listened, doubtful of his having heard aright, when the cry was repeated with even greater vehemence than before, and starting to his feet, he hastened in the direction whence it proceeded.

"The tale told itself at once; some scattered garments lay on the beach; a human head was just visible above the waves at a little distance from the shore; and an old man, wringing his hands in agony, was running to and fro, shrieking for assistance. The invalid, whose strength was now sufficiently restored, threw off his coat, and rushed towards the sea, with the intention of plunging in, and dragging the drowning man ashore.

"'Hasten here, sir, in God's name; help, help, sir, for the love of Heaven. He is my son, sir, my only son!' said the old man, frantically, as he advanced to meet him. 'My only son, sir, and he is dying before his father's eyes!'

"At the first word the old man uttered, the stranger checked himself in his career, and, folding his arms, stood perfectly motionless.

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man, recoiling, 'Heyling!'

"The stranger smiled, and was silent.

"'Heyling!' said the old man, wildly: 'My boy, Heyling, my

dear boy, look, look!' gasping for breath, the miserable father pointed to the spot where the young man was struggling for life.

"'Hark!' said the old man. 'He cries once more. He is alive yet. Heyling, save him, save him!'

"The stranger smiled again, and remained immovable as a statue.

"'I have wronged you,' shrieked the old man, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands together. Be revenged; take my all, my life; cast me into the water at your feet, and, if human nature can repress a struggle, I will die, without stirring hand or foot. Do it, Heyling, do it, but save my boy, he is so young, Heyling, so young to die!'

"'Listen,' said the stranger, grasping the old man fiercely by the wrist: 'I will have life for life, and here is ONE. *My* child died, before his father's eyes, a far more agonising and painful death than that young slanderer of his sister's worth is meeting while I speak. You laughed—laughed in your daughter's face, where death had already set his hand—at our sufferings, then. What do you think of them now? See there, see there!'

"As the stranger spoke, he pointed to the sea. A faint cry died away upon its surface; the last powerful struggle of the dying man agitated the rippling waves for a few seconds: and the spot where he had gone down into his early grave, was undistinguishable from the surrounding water.

* * * * * * *

"Three years had elapsed, when a gentleman alighted from a private carriage at the door of a London attorney, then well known as a man of no great nicety in his professional dealings; and requested a private interview on business of importance. Although evidently not past the prime of life, his face was pale, haggard, and dejected; and it did not require the acute perception of the man of business, to discern at a glance, that disease or suffering had done more to work a change in his appearance, than the mere hand of time could have accomplished in twice the period of his whole life.

"'I wish you to undertake some legal business for me,' said the stranger.

"The attorney bowed obsequiously, and glanced at a larger packet which the gentleman carried in his hand. His visitor observed the look, and proceeded:

"'It is no common business,' said he, 'nor have these papers reached my hands without long trouble and great expense.'

"The attorney cast a still more anxious look at the packet: and his visitor, untying the string that bound it, disclosed a quantity of promissory notes, with copies of deeds, and other documents.

"'Upon these papers,' said the client, 'the man whose name they bear, has raised, as you will see, large sums of money, for some years past. There was a tacit understanding between him and the men into whose hands they originally went—and from whom I have by degrees purchased the whole, for treble and quadruple their nominal value—that these loans should be from time to time renewed, until a given period had elapsed. Such an understanding is nowhere expressed. He has sustained many losses of late; and these obligations accumulating upon him at once, would crush him to the earth.'

"'The whole amount is many thousands of pounds,' said the attorney, looking over the papers.

"'It is,' said the client.

"'What are we to do?' inquired the man of business.

"'Do!' replied the client, with sudden vehemence. 'Put every engine of the law in force, every trick than ingenuity can devise and rascality execute; fair means and foul; the open oppression of the law, aided by all the craft of its most ingenious practitioners. I would have him die a harassing and lingering death, Ruin him, seize and sell his lands and goods, drive him from house and home, and drag him forth a beggar in his old age, to die in a common gaol.'

"'But the costs, my dear sir, the costs of all this,' reasoned the attorney, when he had recovered from his momentary surprise. 'If the defendant be a man of straw, who is to pay the costs, sir?'

"'Name any sum,' said the stranger, his hand trembling so violently with excitement, that he could scarcely hold the pen he seized as he spoke; 'any sum, and it is yours. Don't be afraid to name it, man. I shall not think it dear, if you gain my object.'

"The attorney named a large sum, at hazard, as the advance he should require to secure himself against the possibility of loss; but more with the view of ascertaining how far his client was really disposed to go, than with any idea that he would comply with the demand. The stranger wrote a cheque upon his banker, for the whole amount, and left him.

"The draft was duly honoured, and the attorney, finding that his strange client might be safely relied upon, commenced

his work in earnest. For more than two years afterwards, Mr. Heyling would sit whole days together, in the office, poring over the papers as they accumulated, and reading again and again, his eyes gleaming with joy, the letters of remonstrance, the prayers for a little delay, the representations of the certain ruin in which the opposite party must be involved, which poured in, as suit after suit, and process after process, was commenced. To all applications for a brief indulgence, there was but one reply—the money must be paid. Land, house, furniture, each in its turn, was taken under some one of the numerous executions which were issued; and the old man himself would have been immured in prison had he not escaped the vigilance of the officers, and fled.

"The implacable animosity of Heyling, so far from being satiated by the success of his persecution, increased a hundredfold with the ruin he inflicted. On being informed of the old man's flight, his fury was unbounded. He gnashed his teeth with rage, tore the hair from his head, and assailed with horrid imprecations the men who had been entrusted with the writ. He was only restored to comparative calmness by repeated assurances of the certainty of discovering the fugitive. Agents were sent in quest of him, in all directions; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to, for the purpose of discovering his place of retreat; but it was all in vain. Half a year had passed over, and he was still undiscovered.

"At length, late one night, Heyling, of whom nothing had been seen for many weeks before, appeared at his attorney's private residence, and sent up word that a gentleman wished to see him instantly. Before the attorney, who had recognised his voice from above stairs, could order the servant to admit him, he had rushed up the staircase, and entered the drawing-room pale and breathless. Having closed the door, to prevent being overheard, he sunk into a chair, and said, in a low voice:

"'Hush! I have found him at last.'

"'No!' said the attorney. 'Well done, my dear sir; well done.'

"'He lies concealed in a wretched lodging in Camden Town,' said Heyling. 'Perhaps it is as well, we *did* lose sight of him, for he has been living alone there, in the most abject misery, all the time, and he is poor—very poor.'

"'Very good,' said the attorney. 'You will have the capture made to-morrow, of course?'

"'Yes,' replied Heyling. 'Stay! no! The next day. You are surprised at my wishing to postpone it,' he added, with a ghastly smile; 'but I had forgotten. The next day is an anniversary in his life: let it be done then.'

"'Very good,' said the attorney. 'Will you write down instructions for the officer?'

"'No; let him meet me here, at eight in the evening, and I will accompany him, myself.'

"They met on the appointed night, and, hiring a hackney coach, directed the driver to stop at that corner of the old Pancras Road, at which stands the parish workhouse. By the time they alighted there, it was quite dark; and, proceeding by the dead wall in front of the Veterinary Hospital, they entered a small by-street, which is, or was at that time, called Little College Street, and which, whatever it may be now, was in those days a desolate place enough, surrounded by little else than fields and ditches.

"Having drawn the travelling cap he had on half over his face, and muffled himself in his cloak, Heyling stopped before the meanest-looking house in the street, and knocked gently at the door. It was at once opened by a woman, who dropped a curtsey of recognition, and Heyling, whispering the officer to remain below, crept gently upstairs, and, opening the door of the front room, entered at once.

"The object of his search and his unrelenting animosity, now a decrepit old man, was seated at a bare deal table, on which stood a miserable candle. He started on the entrance of the stranger, and rose feebly to his feet.

"'What now, what now?' said the old man. 'What fresh misery is this? What do you want here?'

"'A word with *you*,' replied Heyling. As he spoke, he seated himself at the other end of the table, and, throwing off his cloak and cap, disclosed his features.

"The old man seemed instantly deprived of the power of speech. He fell backward in his chair, and, clasping his hands together, gazed on the apparition with a mingled look of abhorrence and fear.

"'This day six years,' said Heyling, 'I claimed the life you owed me for my child's. Beside the lifeless form of your daughter, old man, I swore to live a life of revenge. I have never swerved from my purpose for a moment's space; but if I had, one thought of her uncomplaining, suffering look, as she drooped away, or of the starving face of our innocent child, would have nerved

me to my task. My first act of requital you well remember: this is my last.'

"The old man shivered, and his hands dropped powerless by his side.

"'I leave England to-morrow,' said Heyling, after a moment's pause. 'To-night I consign you to the living death to which you devoted her—a hopeless prison—'

"He raised his eyes to the old man's countenance, and paused. He lifted the light to his face, set it gently down, and left the apartment.

"'You had better see to the old man,' he said to the woman, as he opened the door, and motioned the officer to follow him into the street. 'I think he is ill.' The woman closed the door, ran hastily upstairs, and found him lifeless.

* * * * * * *

"Beneath a plain gravestone, in one of the most peaceful and secluded churchyards in Kent, where wild flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around forms the fairest spot in the garden of England, lie the bones of the young mother and her gentle child. But the ashes of the father do not mingle with theirs; nor, from that night forward, did the attorney ever gain the remotest clue to the subsequent history of his queer client."

HAND AND SOUL

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Rivolsimi in quel lato
Là onde venìa la voce,
E parvemi una luce
Che lucea quanto stella:
La mia menta era quella.

Bonaggiunta Urbiciani (1250).

BEFORE any knowledge of painting was brought to Florence, there were already painters in Lucca, and Pisa, and Arezzo, who feared God and loved the art. The workmen from Greece, whose trade it was to sell their own works in Italy and teach Italians to imitate them, had already found in rivals of the soil a skill that could forestall their lessons and cheapen their

labours, more years than is supposed before the art came at all into Florence. The pre-eminence to which Cimabue was raised at once by his contemporaries, and which he still retains to a wide extent even in the modern mind, is to be accounted for, partly by the circumstances under which he arose, and partly by that extraordinary *purpose of fortune* born with the lives of some few, and through which it is not a little thing for any who went before, if they are even remembered as the shadows of the coming of such an one, and the voices which prepared his way in the wilderness. It is thus, almost exclusively, that the painters of whom I speak are now known. They have left little, and but little heed is taken of that which men hold to have been surpassed; it is gone like time gone,—a track of dust and dead leaves that merely led to the fountain.

Nevertheless, of very late years and in very rare instances, some signs of a better understanding have become manifest. A case in point is that of the triptych and two cruciform pictures at Dresden, by Chiaro di Messer Bello dell' Erma, to which the eloquent pamphlet of Dr. Aemmster has at length succeeded in attracting the students. There is another still more solemn and beautiful work, now proved to be by the same hand, in the Pitti gallery at Florence. It is the one to which my narrative will relate.

This Chiaro dell' Erma was a young man of very honourable family in Arezzo; where, conceiving art almost for himself, and loving it deeply, he endeavoured from early boyhood towards the imitation of any objects offered in nature. The extreme longing after a visible embodiment of his thoughts strengthened as his years increased, more even then his sinews or the blood of his life; until he would feel faint in sunsets and at the sight of stately persons. When he had lived nineteen years, he heard of the famous Giunta Pisano; and, feeling much of admiration, with perhaps a little of that envy which youth always feels until it has learned to measure success by time and opportunity, he determined that he would seek out Giunta, and, if possible, become his pupil.

Having arrived in Pisa, he clothed himself in humble apparel, being unwilling that any other thing than the desire he had for knowledge should be his plea with the great painter; and then, leaving his baggage at a house of entertainment, he took his way along the street, asking whom he met for the lodging of Giunta. It soon chanced that one of that city, conceiving him

to be a stranger and poor, took him into his house and refreshed him; afterwards directing him on his way.

When he was brought to speech of Giunta, he said merely that he was a student, and that nothing in the world was so much at his heart as to become that which he had heard told of him with whom he was speaking. He was received with courtesy and consideration, and soon stood among the works of the famous artist. But the forms he saw there were lifeless and incomplete; and a sudden exultation possessed him as he said within himself, "I am the master of this man." The blood came at first into his face, but the next moment he was quite pale and fell to trembling. He was able, however, to conceal his emotion; speaking very little to Giunta, but when he took his leave, thanking him respectfully.

After this, Chiaro's first resolve was, that he would work out thoroughly some one of his thoughts, and let the world know him. But the lesson which he had now learned, of how small a greatness might win fame, and how little there was to strive against, served to make him torpid, and rendered his exertions less continual. Also Pisa was a larger and more luxurious city than Arezzo; and when, in his walks, he saw the great gardens laid out for pleasure, and the beautiful women who passed to and fro, and heard the music that was in the groves of the city at evening, he was taken with wonder that he had never claimed his share of the inheritance of those years in which his youth was cast. And women loved Chiaro; for, in despite of the burthen of study, he was well-favoured and very manly in his walking; and, seeing his face in front, there was a glory upon it, as upon the face of one who feels a light round his hair.

So he put thought from him, and partook of his life. But, one night, being in a certain company of ladies, a gentleman that was there with him began to speak of the paintings of a youth named Bonaventura, which he had seen in Lucca; adding that Giunta Pisano might now look for a rival. When Chiaro heard this, the lamps shook before him and the music beat in his ears. He rose up, alleging a sudden sickness, and went out of that house with his teeth set. And, being again within his room, he wrote up over the door the name of Bonaventura, that it might stop him when he would go out.

He now took to work diligently, not returning to Arezzo, but remaining in Pisa, that no day more might be lost; only living entirely to himself. Sometimes, after nightfall, he would

walk abroad in the most solitary places he could find; hardly feeling the ground under him, because of the thoughts of the day which held him in fever.

The lodging Chiaro had chosen was in a house that looked upon gardens fast by the Church of San Petronio. It was here, and at this time, that he painted the Dresden pictures; as also, in all likelihood, the one—inferior in merit, but certainly his—which is now at Munich. For the most part he was calm and regular in his manner of study; though often he would remain at work through the whole of a day, not resting once so long as the light lasted; flushed, and with the hair from his face. Or, at times, when he could not paint, he would sit for hours in thought of all the greatness the world had known from of old; until he was weak with yearning, like one who gazes upon a path of stars.

He continued in this patient endeavour for about three years, at the end of which his name was spoken throughout all Tuscany. As his fame waxed, he began to be employed, besides easel-pictures, upon wall-paintings; but I believe that no traces remain to us of any of these latter. He is said to have painted in the Duomo; and D'Agincourt mentions having seen some portions of a picture by him which originally had its place above the high altar in the Church of the Certosa; but which, at the time he saw it, being very dilapidated, had been hewn out of the wall, and was preserved in the stores of the convent. Before the period of Dr. Aemmster's researches, however, it had been entirely destroyed.

Chiaro was now famous. It was for the race of fame that he had girded up his loins; and he had not paused until fame was reached; yet now, in taking breath, he found that the weight was still at his heart. The years of his labour had fallen from him, and his life was still in its first painful desire.

With all that Chiaro had done during these three years, and even before with the studies of his early youth, there had always been a feeling of worship and service. It was the peace-offering that he made to God and to his own soul for the eager selfishness of his aim. There was earth, indeed, upon the hem of his raiment; but *this* was of the heaven, heavenly. He had seasons when he could endure to think of no other feature of his hope than this. Sometimes it had even seemed to him to behold that day when his mistress—his mystical lady (now hardly in her ninth year, but whose smile at meeting had already lighted on his soul,)—even she, his own gracious Italian Art—should

pass, through the sun that never sets, into the shadow of the tree of life, and be seen of God and found good: and then it had seemed to him that he, with many who, since his coming, had joined the band of whom he was one (for, in his dream, the body he had worn on earth had been dead an hundred years), were permitted to gather round the blessed maiden, and to worship with her through all ages and ages of ages, saying, Holy, holy, holy. This thing he had seen with the eyes of his spirit; and in this thing had trusted, believing that it would surely come to pass.

But now (being at length led to inquire closely into himself), even as, in the pursuit of fame, the unrest abiding after attainment had proved to him that he had misinterpreted the craving of his own spirit—so also, now that he would willingly have fallen back on devotion, he became aware that much of that reverence which he had mistaken for faith had been no more than the worship of beauty. Therefore, after certain days passed in perplexity, Chiaro said within himself, "My life and my will are yet before me: I will take another aim to my life."

From that moment Chiaro set a watch on his soul, and put his hand to no other works but only to such as had for their end the presentment of some moral greatness that should influence the beholder: and to this end, he multiplied abstractions, and forgot the beauty and passion of the world. So the people ceased to throng about his pictures as heretofore; and, when they were carried through town and town to their destination, they were no longer delayed by the crowds eager to gaze and admire; and no prayers or offerings were brought to them on their path, as to his Madonnas, and his Saints, and his Holy Children, wrought for the sake of the life he saw in the faces that he loved. Only the critical audience remained to him; and these, in default of more worthy matter, would have turned their scrutiny on a puppet or a mantle. Meanwhile, he had no more of fever upon him; but was calm and pale each day in all that he did and in his goings in and out. The works he produced at this time have perished—in all likelihood, not unjustly. It is said (and we may easily believe it), that, though more laboured than his former pictures, they were cold and unemphatic; bearing marked out upon them the measure of that boundary to which they were made to conform.

And the weight was still close to Chiaro's heart: but he held in his breath, never resting (for he was afraid), and would not know it.

Now it happened, within these days, that there fell a great feast in Pisa, for holy matters: and each man left his occupation; and all the guilds and companies of the city were got together for games and rejoicings. And there were scarcely any that stayed in the houses, except ladies who lay or sat along their balconies between open windows which let the breeze beat through the rooms and over the spread tables from end to end. And the golden cloths that their arms lay upon drew all eyes upward to see their beauty; and the day was long; and every hour of the day was bright with the sun.

So Chiaro's model, when he awoke that morning on the hot pavement of the Piazza Nunziata, and saw the hurry of people that passed him, got up and went along with them; and Chiaro waited for him in vain.

For the whole of that morning, the music was in Chiaro's room from the Church close at hand; and he could hear the sounds the crowd made in the streets; hushed only at long intervals while the processions for the feast-day chanted in going under his windows. Also, more than once, there was a high clamour from the meeting of factious persons: for the ladies of both leagues were looking down; and he who encountered his enemy could not choose but draw upon him. Chiaro waited a long time idle; and then knew that his model was gone elsewhere. When at his work, he was blind and deaf to all else; but he feared sloth: for then his stealthy thoughts would begin to beat round and round him, seeking a point for attack. He now rose, therefore, and went to the window. It was within a short space of noon; and underneath him a throng of people was coming out through the porch of San Petronio.

The two greatest houses of the feud in Pisa had filled the church for that mass. The first to leave had been the Gherghiotti; who, stopping on the threshold, had fallen back in ranks along each side of the archway: so that now, in passing outward, the Marotoli had to walk between two files of men whom they hated, and whose fathers had hated theirs. All the chiefs were there and their whole adherents; and each knew the name of each. Every man of the Marotoli, as he came forth and saw his foes, laid back his hood and gazed about him, to show the badge upon the close cap that held his hair. And of the Gherghiotti there were some who tightened their girdles; and some shrilled and threw up their wrists scornfully, as who flies a falcon; for that was the crest of their house.

On the walls within the entry were a number of tall narrow

pictures, presenting a moral allegory of Peace, which Chiaro had painted that year for the Church. The Gherghiotti stood with their backs to these frescoes; and among them Golzo Ninuccio, the youngest noble of the faction, called by the people Golaghiotta, for his debased life. This youth had remained for some while talking listlessly to his fellows, though with his sleepy sunken eyes fixed on them who passed: but now, seeing that no man jostled another, he drew the long silver shoe off his foot and struck the dust out of it on the cloak of him who was going by, asking him how far the tides rose at Viderza. And he said so because it was three months since, at that place, the Gherghiotti had beaten the Marotoli to the sands, and held them there while the sea came in; whereby many had been drowned. And, when he had spoken, at once the whole archway was dazzling with the light of confused swords; and they who had left turned back; and they who were still behind made haste to come forth; and there was so much blood cast up the walls on a sudden, that it ran in long streams down Chiaro's paintings.

Chiaro turned himself from the window; for the light felt dry between his lids, and he could not look. He sat down, and heard the noise of contention driven out of the church-porch and a great way through the streets; and soon there was a deep murmur that heaved and waxed from the other side of the city, where those of both parties were gathering to join in the tumult.

Chiaro sat with his face in his open hands. Once again he had wished to set his foot on a place that looked green and fertile; and once again it seemed to him that the thin mask was about to spread away, and that this time the chill of the water must leave leprosy in his flesh. The light still swam in his head, and bewildered him at first; but when he knew his thoughts, they were these:

"Fame failed me: faith failed me: and now this also—the hope that I nourished in this my generation of men,—shall pass from me, and leave my feet and my hands groping. Yet because of this are my feet become slow and my hands thin. I am as one who, through the whole night, holding his way diligently, hath smitten the steel unto the flint, to lead some whom he knew darkling; who hath kept his eyes always on the sparks that himself made, lest they should fail; and who, towards dawn, turning to bid them that he had guided God speed, sees the wet grass untrodden except of his own feet. I am as the

last hour of the day, whose chimes are a perfect number; whom the next followeth not, nor light ensueth from him; but in the same darkness is the old order begun afresh. Men say, 'This is not God nor man; he is not as we are, neither above us: let him sit beneath us, for we are many.' Where I write Peace, in that spot is the drawing of swords, and there men's footprints are red. When I would sow, another harvest is ripe. Nay, it is much worse with me than thus much. Am I not as a cloth drawn before the light, that the looker may not be blinded? but which showeth thereby the grain of its own coarseness, so that the light seems defiled, and men say, 'We will not walk by it.' Wherefore through me they shall be doubly accursed, seeing that through me they reject the light. May one be a devil and not know it?"

As Chiaro was in these thoughts, the fever encroached slowly on his veins, till he could sit no longer and would have risen; but suddenly he found awe within him, and held his head bowed, without stirring. The warmth of the air was not shaken; but there seemed a pulse in the light, and a living freshness, like rain. The silence was a painful music, that made the blood ache in his temples; and he lifted his face and his deep eyes.

A woman was present in his room, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, fashioned to that time. It seemed that the first thoughts he had ever known were given him as at first from her eyes, and he knew her hair to be the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams. Though her hands were joined, her face was not lifted, but set forward; and though the gaze was austere, yet her mouth was supreme in gentleness. And as he looked, Chiaro's spirit appeared abashed of its own intimate presence, and his lips shook with the thrill of tears; it seemed such a bitter while till the spirit might be indeed alone.

She did not move closer towards him, but he felt her to be as much with him as his breath. He was like one who, scaling a great steepness, hears his own voice echoed in some place much higher than he can see, and the name of which is not known to him. As the woman stood, her speech was with Chiaro: not, as it were, from her mouth or in his ears; but distinctly between them.

"I am an image, Chiaro, of thine own soul within thee. See me, and know me as I am. Thou sayest that fame has failed thee, and faith failed thee; but because at least thou hast not laid thy life unto riches, therefore, though thus late,

I am suffered to come into thy knowledge. Fame sufficed not, for that thou didst seek fame: seek thine own conscience (not thy mind's conscience, but thine heart's), and all shall approve and suffice. For Fame, in noble souls, is a fruit of the Spring: but not therefore should it be said: 'Lo! my garden that I planted is barren: the crocus is here, but the lily is dead in the dry ground, and shall not lift the earth that covers it: therefore I will fling my garden together, and give it unto the builders.' Take heed rather that thou trouble not the wise secret earth; for in the mould that thou throwest up shall the first tender growth lie to waste; which else had been made strong in its season. Yea, and even if the year fall past in all its months, and the soil be indeed, to thee, peevish and incapable, and though thou indeed gather all thy harvest, and it suffice for others, and thou remain vexed with emptiness; and others drink of thy streams, and the drouth rasp thy throat;—let it be enough that these have found the feast good, and thanked the giver: remembering that, when the winter is striven through, there is another year, whose wind is meek, and whose sun fulfilleth all."

While he heard, Chiaro went slowly on his knees. It was not to her that spoke, for the speech seemed within him and his own. The air brooded in sunshine, and though the turmoil was great outside, the air within was at peace. But when he looked in her eyes, he wept. And she came to him, and cast her hair over him, and took her hands about his forehead, and spoke again:

"Thou hast said," she continued, gently, "that faith failed thee. This cannot be. Either thou hadst it not, or thou hast it. But who bade thee strike the point betwixt love and faith? wouldst thou sift the warm breeze from the sun that quickens it? Who bade thee turn upon God and say: 'Behold, my offering is of earth, and not worthy: Thy fire comes not upon it; therefore, though I slay not my brother whom Thou acceptest, I will depart before Thou smite me.' Why shouldst thou rise up and tell God He is not content? Had He, of His warrant, certified so to thee? Be not nice to seek out division; but possess thy love in sufficiency: assuredly this is faith, for the heart must believe first. What He hath set in thine heart to do, that do thou; and even though thou do it without thought of Him, it shall be well done; it is this sacrifice that He asketh of thee, and His flame is upon it for a sign. Think not of Him; but of His love and thy love. For God is no morbid exactor: He hath

no hand to bow beneath, nor a foot, that thou shouldst kiss it."

And Chiaro held silence, and wept into her hair which covered his face; and the salt tears that he shed ran through her hair upon his lips; and he tasted the bitterness of shame.

Then the fair woman, that was his soul, spoke again to him, saying:

"And for this thy last purpose, and for those unprofitable truths of thy teaching,—thine heart hath already put them away, and it needs not that I lay my bidding upon thee. How is it that thou, a man, wouldst say coldly to the mind what God hath said to the heart warmly? Thy will was honest and wholesome; but look well lest this also be folly,—to say, 'I, in doing this, do strengthen God among men.' When at any time hath He cried unto thee, saying, 'My son, lend Me thy shoulder, for I fall'? Deemest thou that the men who enter God's temple in malice, to the provoking of blood, and neither for His love nor for His wrath will abate their purpose—shall afterwards stand, with thee in the porch midway between Him and themselves, to give ear unto thy thin voice, which merely the fall of their visors can drown, and to see thy hands, stretched feebly, tremble among their swords? Give thou to God no more than He asketh of thee; but to man also, that which is man's. In all that thou doest, work from thine own heart, simply; for his heart is as thine, when thine is wise and humble; and he shall have understanding of thee. One drop of rain is as another, and the sun's prism in all: and shalt thou not be as he, whose lives are the breath of One? Only by making thyself his equal can he learn to hold communion with thee, and at last own thee above him. Not till thou lean over the water shalt thou see thine image therein: stand erect, and it shall slope from thy feet and be lost. Know that there is but this means whereby thou mayst serve God with man:—Set thine hand and thy soul to serve man with God."

And when she that spoke had said these words within Chiaro's spirit, she left his side quietly, and stood up as he had first seen her: with her fingers laid together, and her eyes steadfast, and with the breadth of her long dress covering her feet on the floor. And, speaking again, she said:

"Chiaro, servant of God, take now thine Art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me: weak, as I am, and in the weeds of this time; only with eyes which seek out labour, and with a faith, not learned, yet jealous of prayer. Do this;

so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more."

And Chiaro did as she bade him. While he worked, his face grew solemn with knowledge: and before the shadows had turned, his word was done. Having finished, he lay back where he sat, and was asleep immediately: for the growth of that strong sunset was heavy about him, and he felt weak and haggard; like one just come out of a dusk, hollow country, bewildered with echoes, where he had lost himself, and who has not slept for many days and nights. And when she saw him lie back, the beautiful woman came to him, and sat at his head, gazing, and quieted his sleep with her voice.

The tumult of the factions had endured all that day through all Pisa, though Chiaro had not heard it: and the last service of that feast was a mass sung at midnight from the windows of all the churches for the many dead who lay about the city, and who had to be buried before morning, because of the extreme heats.

In the spring of 1847, I was at Florence. Such as were there at the same time with myself—those, at least, to whom Art is something—will certainly recollect how many rooms of the Pitti Gallery were closed through that season, in order that some of the pictures they contained might be examined and repaired without the necessity of removal. The hall, the staircases, and the vast central suite of apartments, were the only accessible portions; and in these such paintings as they could admit from the sealed *penetralia* were profanely huddled together, without respect of dates, schools, or persons.

I fear that, through this interdict, I may have missed seeing many of the best pictures. I do not mean *only* the most talked of: for these, as they were restored, generally found their way somehow into the open rooms, owing to the clamours raised by the students; and I remember how old Ercoli's, the curator's, spectacles used to be mirrored in the reclaimed surface, as he leaned mysteriously over these works with some of the visitors, to scrutinise and elucidate.

One picture that I saw that spring, I shall not easily forget. It was among those, I believe, brought from the other rooms, and had been hung, obviously out of all chronology, immediately beneath that head by Raphael so long known as the *Berrettino*, and now said to be the portrait of Cecco Ciulli.

The picture I speak of is a small one, and represents merely

the figure of a woman, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, chaste and early in its fashion, but exceedingly simple. She is standing: her hands are held together lightly, and her eyes set earnestly open.

The face and hands in this picture, though wrought with great delicacy, have the appearance of being painted at once, in a single sitting: the drapery is unfinished. As soon as I saw the figure, it drew an awe upon me, like water in shadow. I shall not attempt to describe it more than I have already done; for the most absorbing wonder of it was its literality. You knew that figure, when painted, had been seen; yet it was not a thing to be seen of men. This language will appear ridiculous to such as have never looked on the work; and it may be even to some among those who have. On examining it closely, I perceived in one corner of the canvas the words *Manus Animam pinxit*, and the date 1239.

I turned to my Catalogue, but that was useless, for the pictures were all displaced. I then stepped up to the Cavaliere Ercoli, who was in the room at the moment, and asked him regarding the subject and authorship of the painting. He treated the matter, I thought, somewhat slightingly, and said that he could show me the reference in the Catalogue, which he had compiled. This, when found, was not of much value, as it merely said, "Schizzo d'autore incerto," adding the inscription.[1] I could willingly have prolonged my inquiry, in the hope that it might somehow lead to some result; but I had disturbed the curator from certain yards of Guido, and he was not communicative. I went back, therefore, and stood before the picture till it grew dusk.

The next day I was there again; but this time a circle of students was round the spot, all copying the *Berettino*. I contrived, however, to find a place whence I could see *my* picture, and where I seemed to be in nobody's way. For some minutes I remained undisturbed; and then I heard, in an English voice: "Might I beg of you, sir, to stand a little more to this side, as you interrupt my view."

I felt vexed, for, standing where he asked me, a glare struck on the picture from the windows, and I could not see it. How-

[1] I should here say, that in the latest catalogues (owing, as in cases before mentioned, to the zeal and enthusiasm of Dr. Aemmster), this, and several other pictures, have been more competently entered. The work in question is now placed in the *Sala Sessagona*, a room I did not see—under the number 161. It is described as "Figura mistica di Chiaro dell' Erma," and there is a brief notice of the author appended.

ever, the request was reasonably made, and from a countryman; so I complied, and turning away, stood by his easel. I knew it was not worth while; yet I referred in some way to the work underneath the one he was copying. He did not laugh, but he smiled as we do in England. "*Very* odd, is it not?" said he.

The other students near us were all continental; and seeing an Englishman select an Englishman to speak with, conceived, I suppose, that he could understand no language but his own. They had evidently been noticing the interest which the little picture appeared to excite in me.

One of them, an Italian, said something to another who stood next to him. He spoke with a Genoese accent, and I lost the sense in the villainous dialect. "Che so?" replied the other, lifting his eyebrows towards the figure; "roba mistica: 'st' Inglesi son matti sul misticismo: somiglia alle nebbie di là. Li fa pensare alla patria,

e intenerisce il core
Lo dì ch' han detto ai dolci amici adio."

"La notte, vuoi dire," said a third.

There was a general laugh. My compatriot was evidently a novice in the language, and did not take in what was said. I remained silent, being amused.

"Et toi donc?" said he who had quoted Dante, turning to a student, whose birthplace was unmistakable, even had he been addressed in any other language: "que dis-tu de ce genre-là?"

"Moi?" returned the Frenchman, standing back from his easel, and looking at me and at the figure, quite politely, though with an evident reservation: "Je dis, mon cher, que c'est une spécialité dont je me fiche pas mal. Je tiens que quand on ne comprend pas une chose, c'est qu' elle ne signifie rien."

My reader thinks possibly that the French student was right.

MRS. MARTIN'S COMPANY

JANE BARLOW

MRS. MARTIN lived down a high-banked lane, which, as it led no whither in particular, was subject to little traffic, and which she occupied all by herself, though her cabin stood the middle one in a row of three. You could see at a glance that the left-hand dwelling was vacant, for the browned thatch had fallen in helplessly, and the rafters stuck up through it like the ribs of a stranded wreck. The other was less obviously deserted; still its plight could be easily perceived in weedy threshold and cobweb-curtained window. It testified strongly to the lonesomeness of the neighbourhood that no child had yet enjoyed the bliss of sending a stone crash through the flawed greenish pane. Both of them had, in fact, been empty for many months. From the ruined one the Egan family had gone piecemeal, following each other westward in detachments, until even the wrinkled parents were settled in California, where they blinked by day at the strange fierce sunshine, and dreamed by night back again under the soft-shadowed skies of the ould counthry. Soon after that, the O'Keefes had made a more abrupt flitting from next door, departing on the same day, all together, except little Kate and Joe, whose death of the fever was what had "given their poor mother, the crathur, a turn like agin the place." Since then no new tenants had succeeded them in the row, which was, to be sure, out of the way, and out of repair, and not in any respect a desirable residence.

The loss of her neighbours was a very serious misfortune to Mrs. Martin, as she had long depended upon them for a variety of things, which she would have herself summed up in the term "company." She had been early widowed and left quite alone in the world, so that through most of the inexorable years which turned an eager-eyed girl into a regretful-looking little old woman, she had found herself obliged to seek much of her interest in life outside her own small domestic circle—all forlorn centre. This was practicable enough while she lived under one thatch with two large families, who were friendlily content that their solitary neighbour should take cognisance of their goings out and comings in. Upon occasion, indeed, she had unfore-

bodingly grumbled that the young Egans and O'Keefes "had her moidhered wid the whillaballoo they would be risin' contínyal." But when they were gone a terrible blank and silence filled up their place, as well might be, since her kind had thus suddenly receded far beyond her daily ken. A weary Irish mile intervened between her and the nearest cottages of Clonmacreevagh, and it was only "of a very odd while" her rheumatics had allowed her to hobble that far, even to Mass. Seldom or never now did she make her way at all down the windings of the lane, where the grass from its tall banks encroached monthly more and more upon the ancient ruts; and other passengers were hardly less infrequent. The lands about lay waste, or in sheep-walks, so that there was nothing to bring farm-carts and horses and men lumbering and plodding along it, and to attract anybody else what was there but a mournful little old woman in a dark cavernous kitchen, where the only bright objects were the fire-blink and the few bits of shining crockery on the dresser, which she had not often the heart these times to polish up? So week out and week in, never a foot went past her door, as a rule with just one exception.

Michael O'Toole, a farmer on the townland, did her the kindness of letting his cart drive out of its way every Saturday and leave at her house the "loaves and male and grains of tay," which her lameness would have otherwise made it difficult for her to come by. This was, of course, a great convenience, and ensured her one weekly caller. But, unluckily for her, Tim Doran the carter was a man quite singularly devoid of conversational gifts, and so grimly unsociable besides, that her provisions might almost as well have been washed up by the sea, or conveyed to her by inarticulate ravens. If he possibly could, he would always dump down the parcels on the road before her door, and jog along hurriedly unaccosted; and though Mrs. Martin could generally prevent that by keeping a look-out for him, she never succeeded in attaining to the leisurely gossip after which she hungered. Beyond monosyllables Tim would not go, and the poor little wiles by which she sought to inveigle him into discourse failed of detaining him as signally as if they had been gossamer threads stretched across his road. She had so often tried, for instance, to lengthen his halt by telling him she thought "the horse was after pickin' up a stone," that at least he ceased even to glance at the beast's feet for verification, but merely grunted and said: "Oh, git along out of that, mare." Then the mud-splashed blue cart, and sorrel

horse, and whity-brown jacket, would pass out of sight round the turn of the lane, and the chances were that she would not again set eyes on a human face, until they reappeared jogging from the opposite direction that day week.

In the long afternoons, which sometimes began for her before twelve o'clock if she got expeditiously through her "readyin' up," the lag-foot hours seemed dismally empty, and during them she was especially prone to crown her sorrow with memories of her happier things: of the time when she need only slip out at her own door, and in at Mrs. Egan's or Mrs. O'Keefe's, if she wanted plenty of company, and when " themselves or the childer would be runnin' in to her every minute of the day. If there was nothin' else," she mused, " the crathurs of hins and chuckens foostherin' about the place looked a thrifle gay like." Mrs. Martin herself kept no fowl, for " how would she get hobblin' after them, if they tuk to strayin' on her? " And she had attempted vainly to adopt the O'Keefes' cat, which became unsettled in its mind upon the departure of its late owners, and at length roamed desperately away into unknown regions. Thus, nowadays, when the little old woman gazed listlessly over her half-door, all she could see was the quiet green bank across the road, with perhaps a dingy white sheep inanely nibbling atop. Then she would sometimes feel at first as if it were only a dreary Sunday or holiday, when the silence and solitude being caused by her neighbours' absence at Mass would end on their return; but presently she would be stricken with the recollection that they were irrevocably gone, and that, watch as long as she might, she would never more hear their voices grow louder and clearer coming up the lane, preluding their appearance anon, a cheerful company, round the turn fast by.

One afternoon, however, her hopeless lookout did result in something pleasant. It was a Christmas Eve, and dull, chilly weather, overclouded with fleecy grey, thinned here and there into silvery dimness, a sheath from which a fiery rose might flush at sun-setting. She was just turning away with a shiver from the draughty door when she caught a glimpse of Father Gilmore's long coat flapping between the banks. It was a welcome sight, which she had missed through six tedious months and more, for his Reverence, after a severe illness in the spring, had been somehow provided with funds to go seek lost health abroad, and had fared southward upon that quest. His travels, indeed, seemed to have been inconceivably extended.

When to Mrs. Martin's question: "And was your Riverence, now, anythin' as far as Paris?" he replied, with a touch of triumph, "A long step *further*," her imagination recoiled from so wild a track, and she could only stare at him as if astonished to see no visible traces of such wanderings, except maybe a slight tawny tinge like the rust-wraith of many hot sunbeams, superimposed on the normal greenish hue of his well-worn cloth.

Father Gilmore spared her half-an-hour of delightful discourse, to which his own foreign adventures and the home news from Clonmacreevagh gave an animated flow. But when Mrs. Martin's turn came to give an account of herself the conversation fell into a minor key. And the theme that ran through all her despondence was the plaint that she did be terrible short of company. "She had middlin' good health, barrin' the rheumatiz, thanks be to God, but sure she did be cruel lonesome. It's lost she was there, wid niver sight nor sound of man or mortal from mornin' till night; she might as well be an ould wether left fallen in a gripe for all she seen or heard of anythin'. 'Deed now 'twas just the one way wid her as wid the waft of smoke there up her ould chimney that went fluttherin' out on the width of the air, and sorra another breath anywheres nigh it, since ever the crathurs quit. Many a mornin' she'd scarce the heart to be puttin' a light to her fire at all, she was that fretted, ay bedad, she was so."

To these laments Father Gilmore listened with a patience made more difficult by his consciousness that he could suggest no remedy of the practically appropriate sort which is to general consolatory propositions as a close and cordial hearth-glow to the remote and mocking sunshine of a wintry sky. If you want to warm your cold hands those league-long flames some millions of miles away are so much less immediately to the purpose than your neighbouring screed of ruddy coals. This drifted mistily through his mind, as for lack of a more satisfactory remark he said: "You wouldn't think of moving into the town?" But he was well aware that he had spoken foolishly, even before Mrs. Martin answered: "Ah, your Riverence, how would I, so to spake, be runnin' me head out from under me penny of rint?" For her husband, a gamekeeper up at the Big House of the parish, had lost his life by accident at a shooting party, and the family had pensioned off his widow with five weekly shillings and her cabin rent free.

"True for you, Mrs. Martin," said Father Gilmore, standing

up. "But sure, lonely or no, we're all under the protection of God Almighty, and I've brought you a little ornament for your room." Mrs. Martin's eyes sparkled at the last clause of his sentence, while he took out of his pocket a small parcel, and began to strip off its wrappages, which were many folds of bluish tissue-paper, with layers of grey-green dried grass between. "The man I got it from at Marseilles," he said, "told me a lot of them came from Smyrna, and I never stirred these papers that were on it, thinkin' I mightn't be able to do it up so well again. I only hope it's not broke on us." As the thin sheets and light grass-wisps fell off, the blast whistling under the door-sill whisked them about the uneven floor, and Mrs. Martin drew in her breath expectantly. At last the treasure was discovered in perfect preservation, an alabaster statuette of the Virgin, some two fingers high.

I do not know that it was a very fine work of art, but at worst you cannot easily make anything ugly out of alabaster. The Child lay placidly asleep, and the Mother looked young and happy and benignant. For a few moments Mrs. Martin's admiration was quite incoherent, and when she found words Father Gilmore sought to stem the tide of ecstatic gratitude by saying, "And where will you put it? Why, here's a niche looks as if it might have been made for it." The place he pointed to was a little recess beneath a tiny window-slit, formed partly by design, but enlarged by the chance falling out of a fragment from the stone-and-mud wall. A long ray, slanted from the clearing west, reached through the half-door, quivered across the dark room, and just touched the white figure as he set it down. Against the background of grimy wall it shone as if wrought of rosed snow.

"Bedad, then, it's there I'll keep her, and nowhere else," said the little old woman, and he left her in rapt contemplation. As he trudged home he felt sure that his few francs had been well bestowed, and his conviction strengthened with each tedious twist of the deserted ways which lay between Mrs. Martin and her company. By the time he had gained his own house his uppermost thought was a regret that such a trifle had been all he could do for the poor ould dacint body—the Lord might pity her.

It was, however, by no means a trifle to the poor old body herself. For the first few days after her acquisition of the image it took up a wonderful deal of her time and thoughts. Even when she was not standing at gaze in front of it she but seldom

lost it from her sight. Her eyes were continually turning towards the niche, whence it seemed strangely to dominate the room. Its clear whiteness made a mark for the feeblest gleam of ebbing daylight or fading embers; it was the last object to be muffled under bat's-wing gloom, and the first to creep back when morning glimmered in again. She dusted it superfluously many times a day, with a proud pleasure always somewhat dashed by the remembrance that she could exhibit it to no neighbours, who would say, with variations, "Ah! glory be among us, Mrs. Martin, ma'am, but that's rael iligant entirely. Och woman, dear, did you ever see the like of that now at all, at all?"

Still, the most marvellous piece of sculpture ever chiselled would probably betray deficiencies if adopted as one's sole companion in life; and Mrs. Martin's little statuette had obvious shortcomings when so regarded. As the winter wore on the weight of her solitude pressed more and more heavily. The bad weather increased her isolation. Some days there were of bitter frost and snow, and some of streaming rain, and many of wild wind. Once or twice Tim Doran brought her a double supply of provisions, and did not return for a fortnight, and then she felt indeed cut adrift. By-and-bye her vague disconsolateness began to take shape in more definite terrors. She was beset with surmises of ill-disposed vagrants tramping that way to practise unforbidden on her wretched life, and she crept trembling to and from the pool where she filled her water-can. Or ghostly fears overcame her, and she thought at night that she heard the little dead children keening in the deserted room next door, and that mysterious shadows went past the windows, and unseen hands rattled the latch. But through all her shifting mist of trouble the alabaster Virgin shone on her steadily with just a ray of consolation. Every night she said her Rosary before the niche, and almost always her devotions ended in a prayer of her own especial wishing and wording.

"Ah, Lady dear," she would say, "wouldn't you think now to be sendin' me a bit of company? me that's left as disolit as the ould top of Slieve Moyneran this great while back. Ah, wouldn't you then, me Lady? Sure if that's a thrue likeness of you at all, there's the look on you that it's plased you'd be to do a poor body e'er a good turn, ay, is there, bedad. And I couldn't tell you the comfort 'twould be to me, not if I was all night tellin'. Just a neighbour droppin' in now and agin', acushla, I wouldn't make bold to ax you for them to be livin'

convenient alongside of me the way they was. Sure I know the roof's quare and bad, and 'twas small blame to them they quit; but to see an odd sight of one, Lady jewel, if it wouldn't go agin you to conthrive that much. Ah, darlint, supposin' it was only a little ould poor ould wisp of a lone woman the same as meself, it's proud I'd be to behould her; or if it was Crazy Christy, that does be talkin' foolish, the crathur, troth, all's one, the sound of the voice spakin' 'ud be plisant to hear, no matter what ould blathers he tuk the notion to be gabbin'. For it's unnathural still and quiet here these times, Lady dear, wid sorra a livin' sowl comin' next or nigh me ever. But sure 'tis the lonesome house you kep' yourself, Lady dear, one while, and belike you'll remimber it yet, for all you've got back your company agin, ay have you, glory be to God. And wid the help of the Lord it's slippin' over I'll be meself one of these days to them that's gone from me, and no fear but I'll have the grand company then. Only it's the time between whiles does be woeful long and dhrary-like. So if you wouldn't think too bad, Lady honey, to send me the sight of a crathur——." Thus she rambled on piteously, but in answer seemed to come nothing more companionable than the wide-winged gusts of the night wind roving the great grass lands at the back of her cabin where the tiny window-slit peered out. And day followed day with not a step or voice.

It was on a mild-aired morning midway in February that Mrs. Martin, when dusting her precious image, noticed a vivid green speck dotted on the grey wall near its foot. Looking closer, she saw two atoms of leaves pricked up through the cracked mud, belonging no doubt to some seedling weed, she thought, and she would have brushed them away had not some other trifle just then diverted her attention. A few days afterwards, when she happened again to take heed of them, they were crowning a slender shoot, fledged with other delicate leaflets, film-frail, and semi-transparent. She thought the little spray looked pretty and " off the common," and next morning she was pleased to see that it had crept a bit further on the dark wall. Thenceforward she watched its growth with a deep interest. It throve apace. Every day showed a fresh unfolding of leaf-buds and lengthening of stalks, which seemed to climb with a purpose, as if moved by a living will. Their goal was indeed the narrow chink which let a wedge of light slant in just above the Virgin's glistering head, and in making for it they caught boldly at anything that offered tendril hold. One morning the little old

woman untwisted a coil of fairy cordage that was enringing the Virgin's feet, and often after this she had to disengage the figure from the first beginnings of wreathings and windings amongst which it would speedily have disappeared. As it was, they soon filled up the niche with a tangled greenery, and overflowed in long trails and festoons drooping to the floor. Never was there a carven shrine wrought with such intricate traceries. When the early-rising sun struck in through them, the floor was flecked with the wavering shadows of the small fine leaves, whilst they themselves took a translucent vividness of hue that might have been drawn from wells of liquid chrysoprase and beryl; and amid the bower of golden-green steadily glimmered the white-stoled Virgin.

All this was the work of but a few weeks, scarcely stepping over the threshold of Spring. The little old woman watched its progress with pleasure and astonishment. She had never, she said, seen the like of any such a thing before. As the wonder grew, she felt more and more keenly the lack of someone to whom she might impart it. She did try to tell Tim Doran, but the opposite turf-bank would not have received the intelligence much more blankly, and could not have grunted with such discouraging indifference in reply. The man, she thought bitterly, was " as stupid as an ould blind cow. If you tould him you had the Queen of Agypt and the Lord Lieutenant sittin' in there colloguin' be the fire, he wouldn't throuble himself to take a look in at the door." However, no less stolid listeners were forthcoming. Father Gilmore was paying the penalty for his ill-timed return to northern climes in a series of bad colds, and the other neighbours never set foot up the lane.

At last she bethought her of communicating with Father Gilmore by a letter, which Tim Doran might carry, and she laboriously composed one in time for his next weekly call. Whether he would deliver it or not was a point which his manner left doubtful; but he actually did so. Mrs. Martin's letter was " scrawmed " on a bit of coarse brown paper, which, when I saw it some time ago, still smelt so pungently of tea, that I think it must have wrapped one of her parcels. The writing on it ran as follows:

YOUR REVERENCE,—Hopin' this finds you in good health, thanks be to God. Plase your Reverence, the Quarest that ever you witnessed has got clamberin' inside on the wall. I dunno what at all to say to it; never the like of it I seen. But the creelin' of it and the crawlin' of it would terrify you. Makin' offers now and agin it does

be to smoother the Houly Virgin, but sure I'd be long sorry to let it do that bad thrick, after all the goodness of your Reverence. And I was thinkin' this long while your Reverence might be maybe steppin' our way yourself some day, for creepin' over all before it it is every minute of time. Such a terrible quare thing I never heard tell of, and the sorra another sowl except meself have I about the place.

Your obedient,
MARY MARTIN.

This letter caused Father Gilmore considerable uneasiness, for it filled him with misgivings about the mental condition of the writer. Her account of "the Quarest that ever you witnessed," sounded, he feared, painfully like the hallucinations of a mind distempered by over long solitude. "Indeed it's no way for the poor ould body to be left, if one could help it," he mused. Even in his meditations I am sure that Father Gilmore must have used his soft southern brogue—"I've thought many a time it was enough to drive her demented—and now there's some quare sort of delusion she's taken into her head, that's plain, goodness pity her. I'd have done right to go see after her before this, as I was intendin', only somethin' always happened to hinder me."

He was determined now against any further delay, and he set out that very afternoon to visit his afflicted parishioner. The expedition was rather formidable to him, as he had a natural shrinking from stormy scenes, and he fully expected that he would find poor little Mrs. Martin if not downright "raving in no small madness," at least labouring under some frightful delusion, in the shape, apparently, of a hideous monster infesting her abode. This prospect made him so nervously apprehensive that he was glad to fall in with a small youth, one Paddy Greer, who seemed inclined to accompany him upon his walk. All the way along, between the greening hedges of the lane, he remonstrated with himself for letting the gossoon share unwittingly in such an errand, yet he could not make up his mind to dismiss Paddy, or to feel otherwise than relieved by the continued bare-foot patter at his side.

But his relief was far greater when on reaching the cabin he saw its mistress in her little green plaid shawl and black skirt and white cap, standing at her door among the long westering sunbeams, without any signs of excitement or aberration in her demeanour; and his mind grew quite easy when he ascertained that the creeping thing indoors was no horrible phantasmal reptile, but only a twining tapestry of bright leaves and sprays,

which trailed a fold of Spring's garment into the dark-cornered room. Still, satisfactorily as the matter had been cleared up from his former point of view, he could suggest nothing to lessen Mrs. Martin's wonder at the mysterious appearance of the creeper on her wall. His acquaintance with such things was slight, and he merely had an impression that the fashion of the delicately luxuriant foliage seemed unfamiliar to him. So he promised to return on the morrow with the national school-teacher, who was reputed a knowledgeable man about plants. Before that came to pass, however, Mrs. Martin had another visitor. For little Paddy ran home to his mother with the news that "the Widdy Martin was after showin' his Reverence a green affair she had stuck up on her wall, and that he said it was rale super-exthrornary altogether, and he'd get Mr. Colclough to it." At that hearing the curiosity of Paddy's mother incited her to call without losing a moment at Mrs. Martin's house, where she inspected the marvellous growth as well as the falling twilight permitted, and admired the gracious-looking little image quite to its owner's content. Thus Mrs. Martin enjoyed a sociable cup of tea, and an enthralling gossip, which sent her to bed that evening in much better spirits than usual.

Next morning arrived Father Gilmore with the schoolmaster, who was unable to identify the strange creeper, but called its appearance a phenomenon, which seemed somehow to take the edge off the admission of ignorance. His failure only served to heighten a sense of awe and wonderment among several of the neighbours, who also looked in on her during the day. For the village rapidly filled with reports of "the big wrathe of green laves that was windin' itself round the Widdy Martin's grand image of the Blessed Virgin, and it inside on her wall, mind you, where 'twould be a surprisin' thing to see e'er a plant settlin' to grow at all." And about the same time they discovered that the widdy's house was "no such great way to spake of onst you turned down the lane; you could tramp it aisy in a little betther than ten minutes or so from the corner, if you had a mind." In the days which followed numbers of them were so minded, vastly to the comfort of the little old woman, who welcomed them with unbounded joy, and as many cups of tea as she could by any means compass. She harboured no resentment on the score of their long and dreary defection. That was all ended at last. For as the spring weather mellowed into April, and the imprisoned creeper daily flung out profuser sprays and tendril-spirals, the fame of it spread far and wide over the townlands,

until its habitation became quite a place of resort. So many people now turned down the lane that they soon wore a track, which you could see distinctly if you looked along a stretch of its grass-grown surface. The Doctor came, and the District-Inspector, and the Protestant clergyman. Even "higher-up Quality" arrived, and satin-coated steeds have been seen tossing their silver-crested blinkers at the little old woman's door under the supervision of grooms resplendently polished. Seldom or never in these times had she to weary through a long, lonely afternoon; more often she held a crowded reception, when the clack of tongues and clatter of thick-rimmed delft cups sounded cheerily in her kitchen. They scared away all her fears of tramps and ghosts; and she no longer ended her Rosary with mournful petitions for company. Her company had duly assembled.

Towards the beginning of June a fresh development of the marvel occurred, for then the creeper blossomed. Thickly clustered bunches of pale green buds broke swiftly into fantastic curven-throated bugles of a clear-glowing apricot colour, which made gleams as of beaded light in the dark places where they unsheathed themselves. Mrs. Martin said it looked "like as if somebody was after tyin' knots in a ray of the sunshine." Just at this crisis a professor from one of the Queen's Colleges, chancing to be in the neighbourhood, was brought to pronounce upon the case. As behoved a learned man, he gave it an ugly name, which we may ignorantly forget, and he said that it belonged to a species of plants, rare even in its far off oriental habitat, but totally unexampled beneath these northern skies.

However, soon after he had gone, leaving no luminous wake behind him, the little old woman made a brilliant discovery. It was on that same evening, while she was drinking tea with a few of her good gossips, for whom she entertained as strong a regard as did Madam Noah in the ancient morality. Naturally enough, the "quareness" and general inscrutability of the strange creeper had been under discussion, when Mrs. Martin suddenly said: "Ah! women, dear, what talk have we then at all, at all? Sure now it's come clear in me own mind this instaint minute that whatever it may be, 'twas the Virgin herself, Heaven bless her, set it growin' there wid itself, just of a purpose to be fetchin' me in me company. For, signs on it, ne'er a day there is since folk heard tell of it, that there doesn't be some comin' and goin' about the place, and makin' it plisant and gay-like. And sorra a thing else is it brought them, except to

be seein' the quare new plant; aye, bedad, 'twas them twistin' boughs on it streeled the whole lot along in here to me, same as if they were a manner of landin'-net. And sure wasn't I moidherin' her every night of me life to be sendin' me some company? 'Deed was I so, and be the same token ne'er a word of thanks have I thought of sayin' to her, after her takin' the throuble to conthrive it that-away, more shame for me, but I was that tuk up wid it all."

"Thrue for you, Mrs. Martin, ma'am," said Mrs. Brennan; "aiten bread's soon forgotten, as the sayin' is. Howane'er there's nothin' liker than that that was the way of it as you say. What else 'ud be apt to make it go clamber all round the image of her, as if 'twas her belongin'? And didn't the gintleman tell you 'twas nothin' that grows be rights next or nigh this counthry? Ah, for sure 'tis from far enough it's come, if 'twas the like of Them sent it. And a kind thought it was too, glory be to God."

Mrs. Martin's theory gained almost unanimous approval, and was generally accepted by her neighbours, Father Gilmore sanctioning it with a half wistful assent. It had the effect of enhancing the interest taken in the flourishing creeper and the little withered dame, the pledge and recipient of so signal a favour from those who are still the recognised powers that be in such places as Clonmacreevagh. The idea gave a tinge of religious sentiment to the soon established custom of visiting Mrs. Martin, and on the weekly market days you often might have supposed some kind of miniature *pattern* in progress at her cabin, so great was the resort thither of shawled and cloaked and big-basketed country-wives. These guests seldom came empty handed—a couple of fresh eggs, or a roll of butter, or a cake of griddle-bread would be reserved for her at the bottom of the roomy creel. Other visitors were fain to carry off slips of the many trailing sprays, and would leave payment for them in silver coin, which sometimes had the comfortable portliness of half-crowns. But I do not believe that the little old woman valued these very highly, and I think most of them went in providing the strong black tea with which she loved to refresh her friends. And there was never an evening that she did not add to her Rosary: "And the Lord bless the kind heart of you then, Lady jewel, for sendin' me the bit of company."

THE HALF-BROTHERS

MRS. GASKELL

My mother was twice married. She never spoke of her first husband, and it is only from other people that I have learnt what little I know about him. I believe she was scarcely seventeen when she was married to him: and he was barely one-and-twenty. He rented a small farm up in Cumberland, somewhere towards the sea-coast; but he was perhaps too young and inexperienced to have the charge of land and cattle: anyhow, his affairs did not prosper, and he fell into ill health, and died of consumption before they had been three years man and wife, leaving my mother a young widow of twenty, with a little child only just able to walk, and the farm on her hands for four years more by the lease, with half the stock on it dead, or sold off one by one to pay the more pressing debts, and with no money to purchase more, or even to buy the provisions needed for the small consumption of every day. There was another child coming, too; and sad and sorry, I believe, she was to think of it. A dreary winter she must have had in her lonesome dwelling with never another near it for miles around; her sister came to bear her company, and they two planned and plotted how to make every penny they could raise go as far as possible. I can't tell you how it happened that my little sister, whom I never saw, came to sicken and die; but, as if my poor mother's cup was not full enough, only a fortnight before Gregory was born the little girl took ill of scarlet fever, and in a week she lay dead. My mother was, I believe, just stunned with this last blow. My aunt has told me that she did not cry; Aunt Fanny would have been thankful if she had; but she sat holding the poor wee lassie's hand, and looking in her pretty, pale, dead face, without so much as shedding a tear. And it was all the same, when they had to take her away to be buried. She just kissed the child, and sat her down in the window-seat to watch the little black train of people (neighbours—my aunt, and one far-off cousin, who were all the friends they could muster) go winding away amongst the snow, which had fallen thinly over the country the night before. When my aunt came back from the funeral, she found my mother in the same place, and as dry-eyed as ever. So she

continued until after Gregory was born; and, somehow, his coming seemed to loosen the tears, and she cried day and night, till my aunt and the other watcher looked at each other in dismay, and would fain have stopped her if they had but known how. But she bade them let her alone, and not be over-anxious, for every drop she shed eased her brain, which had been in a terrible state before for want of the power to cry. She seemed after that to think of nothing but her new little baby; she had hardly appeared to remember either her husband or her little daughter that lay dead in Brigham churchyard—at least so Aunt Fanny said; but she was a great talker, and my mother was very silent by nature, and I think Aunt Fanny may have been mistaken in believing that my mother never thought of her husband and child just because she never spoke about them. Aunt Fanny was older than my mother, and had a way of treating her like a child; but, for all that, she was a kind, warm-hearted creature, who thought more of her sister's welfare than she did of her own; and it was on her bit of money that they principally lived, and on what the two could earn by working for the great Glasgow sewing-merchants. But by-and-by my mother's eyesight began to fail. It was not that she was exactly blind, for she could see well enough to guide herself about the house, and to do a good deal of domestic work; but she could no longer do fine sewing and earn money. It must have been with the heavy crying she had had in her day, for she was but a young creature at this time, and as pretty a young woman, I have heard people say, as any on the country side. She took it sadly to heart that she could no longer gain anything towards the keep of herself and her child. My Aunt Fanny would fain have persuaded her that she had enough to do in managing their cottage and minding Gregory; but my mother knew that they were pinched, and that Aunt Fanny herself had not as much to eat, even of the commonest kind of food, as she could have done with; and as for Gregory, he was not a strong lad, and needed, not more food—for he always had enough, whoever went short—but better nourishment, and more flesh meat. One day—it was Aunt Fanny who told me all this about my poor mother, long after her death—as the sisters were sitting together, Aunt Fanny working, and my mother hushing Gregory to sleep, William Preston, who was afterwards my father, came in. He was reckoned an old bachelor; I suppose he was long past forty, and he was one of the wealthiest farmers thereabouts, and had known my grandfather well, and my mother and my aunt in

their more prosperous days. He sat down, and began to twirl his hat by way of being agreeable; my Aunt Fanny talked, and he listened and looked at my mother. But he said very little, either on that visit, or on many another that he paid before he spoke out what had been the real purpose of his calling so often all along, and from the very first time he came to their house. One Sunday, however, my Aunt Fanny stayed away from church, and took care of the child, and my mother went alone. When she came back, she ran straight upstairs, without going into the kitchen to look at Gregory or speak any word to her sister, and Aunt Fanny heard her cry as if her heart was breaking; so she went up and scolded her right well through the bolted door, till at last she got her to open it. And then she threw herself on my aunt's neck, and told her that William Preston had asked her to marry him, and had promised to take good charge of her boy, and to let him want for nothing, neither in the way of keep nor of education, and that she had consented. Aunt Fanny was a good deal shocked at this; for, as I have said, she had often thought that my mother had forgotten her first husband very quickly, and now here was proof positive of it, if she could so soon think of marrying again. Besides, as Aunt Fanny used to say, she herself would have been a far more suitable match for a man of William Preston's age than Helen, who, though she was a widow, had not seen her four-and-twentieth summer. However, as Aunt Fanny said, they had not asked her advice; and there was much to be said on the other side of the question. Helen's eyesight would never be good for much again, and as William Preston's wife she would never need to do anything, if she chose to sit with her hands before her; and a boy was a great charge to a widowed mother; and now there would be a decent steady man to see after him. So, by-and-by, Aunt Fanny seemed to take a brighter view of the marriage than did my mother herself, who hardly ever looked up, and never smiled after the day when she promised William Preston to be his wife. But much as she had loved Gregory before, she seemed to love him more now. She was continually talking to him when they were alone, though he was far too young to understand her moaning words, or give her any comfort, except by his caresses.

At last William Preston and she were wed; and she went to be mistress of a well-stocked house, not above half-an-hour's walk from where Aunt Fanny lived. I believe she did all that she could to please my father; and a more dutiful wife, I have

heard him himself say, could never have been. But she did not love him, and he soon found it out. She loved Gregory, and she did not love him. Perhaps, love would have come in time, if he had been patient enough to wait; but it just turned him sour to see how her eye brightened and her colour came at the sight of that little child, while for him who had given her so much she had only gentle words as cold as ice. He got to taunt her with the difference in her manner, as if that would bring love: and he took a positive dislike to Gregory,—he was so jealous of the ready love that always gushed out like a spring of fresh water when he came near. He wanted her to love him more, and perhaps that was all well and good; but he wanted her to love her child less, and that was an evil wish. One day, he gave way to his temper, and cursed and swore at Gregory, who had got into some mischief, as children will; my mother made some excuse for him; my father said it was hard enough to have to keep another man's child, without having it perpetually held up in its naughtiness by his wife, who ought to be always in the same mind as he was; and so from little they got to more; and the end of it was, that my mother took to her bed before her time, and I was born that very day. My father was glad, and proud, and sorry, all in a breath; glad and proud that a son was born to him; and sorry for his poor wife's state, and to think how his angry words had brought it on. But he was a man who liked better to be angry than sorry, so he soon found out that it was all Gregory's fault, and owed him an additional grudge for having hastened my birth. He had another grudge against him before long. My mother began to sink the day after I was born. My father sent to Carlisle for doctors, and would have coined his heart's blood into gold to save her, if that could have been; but it could not. My Aunt Fanny used to say sometimes, that she thought that Helen did not wish to live, and so just let herself die away without trying to take hold on life; but when I questioned her, she owned that my mother did all the doctors bade her do, with the same sort of uncomplaining patience with which she had acted through life. One of her last requests was to have Gregory laid in her bed by my side, and then she made him take hold of my little hand. Her husband came in while she was looking at us so, and when he bent tenderly over her to ask her how she felt now, and seemed to gaze on us two little half-brothers, with a grave sort of kindliness, she looked up in his face and smiled, almost her first smile at him; and such a sweet smile! as more besides

Aunt Fanny have said. In an hour she was dead. Aunt Fanny came to live with us. It was the best thing that could be done. My father would have been glad to return to his old mode of bachelor life, but what could he do with two little children? He needed a woman to take care of him, and who so fitting as his wife's elder sister? So she had the charge of me from my birth; and for a time I was weakly, as was but natural, and she was always beside me, night and day watching over me, and my father nearly as anxious as she. For his land had come down from father to son for more than three hundred years, and he would have cared for me merely as his flesh and blood that was to inherit the land after him. But he needed something to love, for all that, to most people, he was a stern, hard man, and he took to me as, I fancy, he had taken to no human being before—as he might have taken to my mother, if she had had no former life for him to be jealous of. I loved him back again right heartily. I loved all around me, I believe, for everybody was kind to me. After a time, I overcame my original weakliness of constitution, and was just a bonny, strong-looking lad whom every passer-by noticed, when my father took me with him to the nearest town.

At home I was the darling of my aunt, the tenderly-beloved of my father, the pet and plaything of the old domestics, the "young master" of the farm-labourers, before whom I played many a lordly antic, assuming a sort of authority which sat oddly enough, I doubt not, on such a baby as I was.

Gregory was three years older than I. Aunt Fanny was always kind to him in deed and in action, but she did not often think about him, she had fallen so completely into the habit of being engrossed by me, from the fact of my having come into her charge as a delicate baby. My father never got over his grudging dislike to his step-son, who had so innocently wrestled with him for the possession of my mother's heart. I mistrust me, too, that my father always considered him as the cause of my mother's death and my early delicacy; and utterly unreasonable as this may seem, I believe my father rather cherished his feeling of alienation to my brother as a duty, than strove to repress it. Yet not for the world would my father have grudged him anything that money could purchase. That was, as it were, in the bond when he had wedded my mother. Gregory was lumpish and loutish, awkward and ungainly, marring whatever he meddled in, and many a hard word and sharp scolding did he get from the people about the farm, who hardly waited till my

father's back was turned before they rated the step-son. I am ashamed—my heart is sore to think how I fell into the fashion of the family, and slighted my poor orphan step-brother. I don't think I ever scouted him, or was wilfully ill-natured to him; but the habit of being considered in all things, and being treated as something uncommon and superior, made me insolent in my prosperity, and I exacted more than Gregory was always willing to grant, and then, irritated, I sometimes repeated the disparaging words I had heard others use with regard to him, without fully understanding their meaning. Whether he did or not I cannot tell. I am afraid he did. He used to turn silent and quiet—sullen and sulky, my father thought it: stupid, Aunt Fanny used to call it. But every one said he was stupid and dull, and this stupidity and dulness grew upon him. He would sit without speaking a word, sometimes, for hours; then my father would bid him rise and do some piece of work, may be, about the farm. And he would take three or four tellings before he would go. When we were sent to school, it was all the same. He could never be made to remember his lessons; the schoolmaster grew weary of scolding and flogging, and at last advised my father just to take him away, and set him to some farm-work that might not be above his comprehension. I think he was more gloomy and stupid than ever after this, yet he was not a cross lad; he was patient and good-natured, and would try to do a kind turn for any one, even if they had been scolding or cuffing him not a minute before. But very often his attempts at kindness ended in some mischief to the very people he was trying to serve, owing to his awkward, ungainly ways. I suppose I was a clever lad; at any rate, I always got plenty of praise; and was, as we called it, the cock of the school. The schoolmaster said I could learn anything I chose, but my father, who had no great learning himself, saw little use in much for me, and took me away betimes, and kept me with him about the farm. Gregory was made into a kind of shepherd, receiving his training under old Adam, who was nearly past his work. I think old Adam was almost the first person who had a good opinion of Gregory. He stood to it that my brother had good parts, though he did not rightly know how to bring them out; and, for knowing the bearings of the Fells, he said he had never seen a lad like him. My father would try to bring Adam round to speak of Gregory's faults and shortcomings; but, instead of that, he would praise him twice as much, as soon as he found out what was my father's object.

One winter-time, when I was about sixteen, and Gregory nineteen, I was sent by my father on an errand to a place about seven miles distant by the road, but only about four by the Fells. He bade me return by the road whichever way I took in going, for the evenings closed in early, and were often thick and misty; besides which, old Adam, now paralytic and bed-ridden, foretold a downfall of snow before long. I soon got to my journey's end, and soon had done my business; earlier by an hour, I thought, than my father had expected, so I took the decision of the way by which I would return into my own hands, and set off back again over the Fells, just as the first shades of evening began to fall. It looked dark and gloomy enough; but everything was so still that I thought I should have plenty of time to get home before the snow came down. Off I set at a pretty quick pace. But night came on quicker. The right path was clear enough in the daytime, although at several points two or three exactly similar diverged from the same place; but when there was a good light, the traveller was guided by the sight of distant objects,—a piece of rock,—a fall in the ground—which were quite invisible to me now. I plucked up a brave heart, however, and took what seemed to me the right road. It was wrong, nevertheless, and led me whither I knew not, but to some wild boggy moor where the solitude seemed painful, intense, as if never footfall of man had come thither to break the silence. I tried to shout—with the dimmest possible hope of being heard—rather to reassure myself by the sound of my own voice; but my voice came husky and short, and yet it dismayed me; it seemed so weird and strange, in that noiseless expanse of black darkness. Suddenly the air was filled thick with dusky flakes, my face and hands were wet with snow. It cut me off from the slightest knowledge of where I was, for I lost every idea of the direction from which I had come, so that I could even retrace my steps; it hemmed me in, thicker, thicker, with a darkness that might be felt. The boggy soil on which I stood quaked under me if I remained long in one place, and yet I dared not move far. All my youthful hardiness seemed to leave me at once. I was on the point of crying, and only very shame seemed to keep it down. To save myself from shedding tears, I shouted—terrible, wild shouts for bare life they were. I turned sick as I paused to listen; no answering sound came but the unfeeling echoes. Only the noiseless, pitiless snow kept falling thicker, thicker—faster, faster! I was growing numb and sleepy. I tried to move

about, but I dared not go far, for fear of the precipices which, I knew, abounded in certain places on the Fells. Now and then, I stood still and shouted again; but my voice was getting choked with tears, as I thought of the desolate helpless death I was to die, and how little they at home, sitting round the warm, red, bright fire, wotted what was become of me,—and how my poor father would grieve for me—it would surely kill him—it would break his heart, poor old man! Aunt Fanny too—was this to be the end of all her cares for me? I began to review my life in a strange kind of vivid dream, in which the various scenes of my few boyish years passed before me like visions. In a pang of agony, caused by such remembrance of my short life, I gathered up my strength and called out once more, a long, despairing, wailing cry, to which I had no hope of obtaining any answer, save from the echoes around, dulled as the sound might be by the thickened air. To my surprise I heard a cry—almost as long, as wild as mine—so wild, that it seemed unearthly, and I almost thought it must be the voice of some of the mocking spirits of the Fells, about whom I had heard so many tales. My heart suddenly began to beat fast and loud. I could not reply for a minute or two. I nearly fancied I had lost the power of utterance. Just at this moment a dog barked. Was it Lassie's bark—my brother's collie?—an ugly enough brute, with a white, ill-looking face, that my father always kicked whenever he saw it, partly for its own demerits, partly because it belonged to my brother. On such occasions, Gregory would whistle Lassie away, and go off and sit with her in some outhouse. My father had once or twice been ashamed of himself, when the poor collie had yowled out with the suddenness of the pain, and had relieved himself of his self-reproach by blaming my brother, who, he said, had no notion of training a dog, and was enough to ruin any collie in Christendom with his stupid way of allowing them to lie by the kitchen fire. To all which Gregory would answer nothing, nor even seem to hear, but go on looking absent and moody.

Yes! there again! It was Lassie's bark! Now or never! I lifted up my voice and shouted "Lassie! Lassie! For God's sake, Lassie!" Another moment, and the great white-faced Lassie was curving and gambolling with delight round my feet and legs, looking, however, up in my face with her intelligent, apprehensive eyes, as if fearing lest I might greet her with a blow, as I had done oftentimes before. But I cried with gladness, as I stooped down and patted her. My mind was sharing

in my body's weakness, and I could not reason, but I knew that help was at hand. A grey figure came more and more distinctly out of the thick, close-pressing darkness. It was Gregory wrapped in his maud.

"Oh, Gregory!" said I, and I fell upon his neck, unable to speak another word. He never spoke much, and made me no answer for some little time. Then he told me we must move, we must walk for the dear life—we must find our road home, if possible; but we must move, or we should be frozen to death.

"Don't you know the way home?" asked I.

"I thought I did when I set out, but I am doubtful now. The snow blinds me, and I am feared that in moving about just now, I have lost the right gait homewards."

He had his shepherd's staff with him, and by dint of plunging it before us at every step we took—clinging close to each other, we went on safely enough, as far as not falling down any of the steep rocks, but it was slow, dreary work. My brother, I saw, was more guided by Lassie and the way she took than anything else, trusting to her instinct. It was too dark to see far before us; but he called her back continually, and noted from what quarter she returned, and shaped our slow steps accordingly. But the tedious motion scarcely kept my very blood from freezing. Every bone, every fibre in my body seemed first to ache, and then to swell, and then to turn numb with the intense cold. My brother bore it better than I, from having been more out upon the hills. He did not speak, except to call Lassie. I strove to be brave, and not complain; but now I felt the deadly fatal sleep stealing over me.

"I can go no farther," I said, in a drowsy tone. I remember I suddenly became dogged and resolved. Sleep I would, were it only for five minutes. If death were to be the consequence, sleep I would. Gregory stood still. I suppose, he recognised the peculiar phase of suffering to which I had been brought by the cold.

"It is of no use," said he, as if to himself. "We are no nearer home than we were when we started, as far as I can tell. Our only chance is in Lassie. Here! roll thee in my maud, lad, and lay thee down on this sheltered side of this bit of rock. Creep close under it, lad, and I'll lie by thee, and strive to keep the warmth in us. Stay! hast gotten aught about thee they'll know at home?"

I felt him unkind thus to keep me from slumber, but on his repeating the question, I pulled out my pocket-handkerchief,

of some showy pattern, which Aunt Fanny had hemmed for me—Gregory took it, and tied it round Lassie's neck.

"Hie thee, Lassie, hie thee home!" And the white-faced ill-favoured brute was off like a shot in the darkness. Now I might lie down—now I might sleep. In my drowsy stupor, I felt that I was being tenderly covered up by my brother; but what with I neither knew nor cared—I was too dull, too selfish, too numb to think and reason, or I might have known that in that bleak bare place there was naught to wrap me in, save what was taken off another. I was glad enough when he ceased his cares and lay down by me. I took his hand.

"Thou canst not remember, lad, how we lay together thus by our dying mother. She put thy small, wee hand in mine—I reckon she sees us now; and belike we shall soon be with her. Anyhow, God's will be done."

"Dear Gregory," I muttered, and crept nearer to him for warmth. He was talking still, and again about our mother, when I fell asleep. In an instant—or so it seemed—there were many voices about me—many faces hovering round me—the sweet luxury of warmth was stealing into every part of me. I was in my own little bed at home. I am thankful to say, my first word was "Gregory?"

A look passed from one to another—my father's stern old face strove in vain to keep its sternness; his mouth quivered, his eyes filled with unwonted tears.

"I would have given him half my land—I would have blessed him as my son,—Oh God! I would have knelt at his feet, and asked him to forgive my hardness of heart."

I heard no more. A whirl came through my brain, catching me back to death.

I came slowly to my consciousness, weeks afterwards. My father's hair was white when I recovered, and his hands shook as he looked into my face.

We spoke no more of Gregory. We could not speak of him; but he was strangely in our thoughts. Lassie came and went with never a word of blame; nay, my father would try to stroke her, but she shrank away; and he, as if reproved by the poor dumb beast, would sigh, and be silent and abstracted for a time.

Aunt Fanny—always a talker—told me all. How, on that fatal night, my father, irritated by my prolonged absence, and probably more anxious than he cared to show, had been fierce and imperious, even beyond his wont, to Gregory; had upbraided him with his father's poverty, his own stupidity which

made his services good for nothing—for so, in spite of the old shepherd, my father always chose to consider them. At last, Gregory had risen up, and whistled Lassie out with him—poor Lassie, crouching underneath his chair for fear of a kick or a blow. Some time before, there had been some talk between my father and my aunt respecting my return; and when Aunt Fanny told me all this, she said she fancied that Gregory might have noticed the coming storm, and gone out silently to meet me. Three hours afterwards, when all were running about in wild alarm, not knowing whither to go in search of me—not even missing Gregory, or heeding his absence, poor fellow—poor, poor fellow!—Lassie came home, with my handkerchief tied round her neck. They knew and understood, and the whole strength of the farm was turned out to follow her, with wraps, and blankets, and brandy, and everything that could be thought of. I lay in chilly sleep, but still alive, beneath the rock that Lassie guided them to. I was covered over with my brother's plaid, and his thick shepherd's coat was carefully wrapped round my feet. He was in his shirt-sleeves—his arm thrown over me—a quiet smile (he had hardly ever smiled in life) upon his still, cold face.

My father's last words were, "God forgive me my hardness of heart towards the fatherless child!"

And what marked the depth of his feeling of repentance, perhaps more than all, considering the passionate love he bore my mother, was this; we found a paper of directions after his death, in which he desired that he might lie at the foot of the grave, in which, by his desire, poor Gregory had been laid with OUR MOTHER.

MARKHEIM

R. L. STEVENSON

"YES," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets,

and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas Day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tip-toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady now," he went on, "this hand glass —fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection,

too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass," he said hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor —nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favoured," said he.

"I ask you," said Markheim, "for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies—this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer, with some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I," cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other: why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop!"

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markham moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer: and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewerlike dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar,

and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still, as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise: poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of

his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumour of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighbouring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startingly recalled from that tender exercise; happy family parties, struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger: every degree and age and humour, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbour hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweet-hearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Ay, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighbourhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair-day in a fishers' village: a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of the brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice

of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly coloured: Brownrigg with her apprentice; the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion; he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realise the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, not a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced towards the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And, as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armour posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed

pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would posses his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first story, the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitious terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chessboard, should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch;

ay, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God Himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room, and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing, with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton side-board, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbours. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brookside, ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall) and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vice. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the newcomer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candlelight of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace, as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile; and when he added: "You are looking for the money, I believe?" it was in the tones of everyday politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

"I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favourite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you?

No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

"Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to men and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you could prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?"

"All this is very feelingly expressed," was the reply, "but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you; I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?"

"For what price?" asked Markheim.

"I offer you the service for a Christmas gift," returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. "No," said he, "I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that

put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil."

"I have no objection to a deathbed repentance," observed the visitant.

"Because you disbelieve their efficacy!" Markheim cried.

"I do not say so," returned the other; "but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under colour of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service—to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a deathbed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope."

"And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at the last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?"

"Murder is to me no special category," replied the other. "All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which

I live, consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offer to forward your escape."

"I will lay my heart open to you," answered Markheim. "This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine are not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues without effect,

like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humour, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "in none! I have gone down in all."

"Then," said the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment, the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanour.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried; "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales: up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph, and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the farther side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamour.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

"You had better go for the police," said he: "I have killed your master."

THE VEILED PORTRAIT

JAMES M'GOVAN

I USED to wonder what would be the end of the fierce war between M'Indoe and the thieves; for a war it very speedily became, in which, if M'Indoe was not the sufferer, he owed his safety entirely to his intimate knowledge of all their crimes and haunts. They could not hunt *him* down, for he lived by unremitting hard labour; and still less could they do him bodily injury, for he glided about more like a shadow than even their own dreaded leader, The Ruffian. The truth is, they feared M'Indoe, and cowered in their holes, as he stalked gloomily through their haunts, as if he had carried a whole cohort of invisible detectives at his back. Perhaps they read the expression of his seamed and sunken features aright; for if ever quenchless vengeance was written on a face, it was in these rigid lines. On the whole, I was inclined to look upon them as wolves—tearing and fighting each other, and *all* doomed to perish in the struggle.

As for M'Indoe, I got to believe that every merciful feeling——every ray of sunshine—was completely shut out of his heart; but in this I was mistaken, as the following interesting case, and another which shall follow, will show. In relating the simple incidents, I will also give another instance of the boundless devotion and quenchless love of a mother.[1]

In a little bright room at the top of one of those long stairs in Milne Square, two persons sat conversing pleasantly as equals, though their stations in life were very different. The first was the tenant of the room, Mrs. Lyons, who, through almost every phase of happiness and good fortune, calamity and reverses, had at last landed there in the poverty and retirement of that garret; and the second was Walter Hutton, medical student and amateur artist, who had been sent there by the Public Dispensary to attend the old lady in her sickness. Hutton was a gentleman by birth and education, studying for a profession merely for form's sake, and gliding along carelessly and easily, as became a man of wealth; but the suspicion had just dawned upon him that the poor woman he attended was

[1] See *Brought to Bay*, p. 261.

not what she seemed, but in some respects even his superior. Mrs. Lyons sat propped in a chair by the fire facing the light, giving the "laddie," as she persisted in calling her visitor, such solid and sterling advice, and talking to him in such a kind, motherly strain, that at last his wayward sympathies were touched.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he said, brightening into a frank smile, and instinctively bowing before his poor patient, "but I think I have been mistaken in you. It seems to me that you have not always been in such a position. Believe me, I have no wish to pry into your affairs; but you talk so kindly and warmly, that I'm sure you must have had a wayward son of your own at one time?"

The words came out in a thoughtless, impetuous burst; but the speaker was astonished at their swift effect on the grave, still face before him. Mrs. Lyons started violently, looked him keenly in the face to make sure that the words had no special meaning, and then pressed her hand on her breast with a weary sigh, and remained silent. It did not escape the quick eye of the student, however, that her tearful gaze was for a moment turned to a painting, veiled with crape and hung above the fireplace, the massive gilt frame of which contrasted strangely with the poverty of the other furnishings; and as this was a subject that had often dwelt in his mind and excited his curiosity, he determined to gently lead the conversation in that direction. But before any suitable form of words could rise to his hushed lips, Mrs. Lyons had found voice to say:

"Oh, laddie! dinna speak of that. I once had a son, it is true, beautiful and guileless as the angels in heaven; but because a' my heart was set on him, he was swept for ever from my sight"; and the poor mother shook as she covered her furrowed face with her hands.

"He is dead, then?" returned the student in a subdued tone.

"Ay, dead to me—dead to a' the world—lost to God and man—a hounded thief!" cried the old woman, looking up with a flash in her eye. "They tell me so, and I maun believe it. In my happy days, I lived in the town of Paisley—admired, envied, and respected, with no care but the upbringing of my fatherless boy. They tell me that from a boy he became a man, robbing me and others on every hand, and at last was sent to herd with the off-scourings of the earth in a prison; but that woeful time seems now but a fevered dream. I love to think of him as dead—as taken from me when guileless and innocent

as he stands in that portrait"; and with a shaking hand she indicated the veiled picture.

"Your story interests me much," said the student respectfully. "Might I look upon the portrait for a moment? You know I paint a great deal myself; indeed, I am an enthusiast in the art, and have scarcely yet decided whether I may not follow it as a profession."

Her answer came slowly, and with manifest reluctance.

"I care not to look upon it often myself," she said; "but as you have shown me much kindness, and it may teach you how the most innocent may through time become corrupted, I will not say you nay."

Walter Hutton, with an eager hand, drew aside the veil of crape, and then started back with an exclamation of wonder and delight, which merged into a breathless and ecstatic silence as he ran his eye over the beautiful picture that stood revealed. It was the picture of a young boy, whose fair cheeks were browned with the sun and flushed with happiness and exercise, with a flood of golden hair floating forward over his shoulders, as he half-slyly and half-roguishly peeped out from behind a cherry tree, playfully holding up a bunch of the red fruit in his hand. On the frame beneath was legibly painted the words, "Cherry ripe! James Lyons, aged 7."

For some moments there was a deep silence in the room, the student being rapt in admiration, and the poor mother in memories of the past; but at last, after viewing the picture in every light, the young man's words came in an impulsive burst:

"I have never seen anything so exquisite; it is beautiful beyond all praise!" he cried, turning to the delighted owner. "Do you not know, ma'am, that this painting is worth money—a considerable sum—perhaps one or two hundred pounds?"

A quiet smile lit up the face of his patient.

"I have been told so often in happier days, when my wee Jim was young and innocent," she softly replied. "But in all my struggles, and they have not been few, I never even dreamed of parting with it, not only for my boy's sake, but that of the hand that painted it. It was my husband's last work. It was a labour of love, and could never be valued in money. A whole fortune laid at my feet would not buy it."

The student's faint hopes were instantly crushed, and he turned and once more gazed at the picture with a tinge of covetous envy creeping into his heart.

"I did not mean to buy it," he said at last; "though, if you had been so inclined, I might have seen my way even to that. But would you not allow me to copy it—to incorporate it in a picture I am at present hard at work upon?"

"And then, it would be exhibited—exposed to the vulgar gaze of hundreds?" calmly inquired Mrs. Lyons.

"It would be exhibited, doubtless," awkwardly returned the student-artist, "but it would be in a different form; and though it is possible that some who have known you in former times might see and recognise it, their comments could never injure you. Besides I would be willing to pay any sum that you might think fit to ask for the favour, and would certainly guard it, while in my possession, with even more sacred care than you can possibly exhibit."

These last words almost died on his lips as he uttered them, for the quiet refusal was written on his patient's face even before she spoke.

"I cannot oblige you," was her firm reply; "I could not trust the portrait a moment from my sight."

"But think," he persisted. "The money——"

"Has no influence with me," she quietly rejoined. "I had it once—it went, wrenching from me at the same moment my darling son; and as it has only cursed me in the past, I care not though I never again feel its influence."

What answer could there be to such a speech? The young student—the gentleman who had never from his infancy had his slightest wish crossed—might well turn away with a flush of disappointment on his cheeks, and bite his lip in silence. But now every fresh objection only made him more eager to attain his object, and after a pause he pleadingly said:

"Then, Mrs. Lyons, you might allow me to take a sketch of it here, in your presence?"

"Not for such a purpose. Laddie, I'm sorry that I ever yielded so far as to let you see it at all," firmly returned his patient, rising from her seat with difficulty, and again drawing the veil over the picture. "Think of it as if you knew nothing of what lies behind this veil. You have much to learn yet in repressing your fancies before you can rise to be a good and noble man."

"I don't know," he repiled, for the moment flashing up into a semblance of eloquence. "It is the sole ambition of my life to be an artist. I love it with all my heart and soul, but have been forced into the drudgery of this medical profession till

I can show the world and my friends some conception so powerful that every objection should at once be hushed. Such a picture I am now at work upon, and with a subject and effects such as this portrait contains worked into it, my triumph would be complete. You who have been the wife of an artist can understand my feelings. I would sacrifice anything to this one ambition. Now, Mrs. Lyons, you know how much depends on your granting this simple request—let me hear my sentence!"

The old woman was moved—visibly moved; for in spite of his carelessness and easy selfishness, there was a frankness and openness in his manner and talk especially winning to one living in poverty and obscurity.

But her decision remained firm and unaltered: she would not allow him to remove the picture, to copy it, or use it in any way. He plied her in every possible manner—warmly, reproachfully, and temptingly—but all in vain, and thus they parted for the day.

"I'll get it yet," he muttered to himself, as he descended the stair—"I'll get it yet, though I should have to employ some one to steal it!"

Next day he returned to the subject, but found Mrs. Lyons cold, silent, and distant. All his offers were either answered with a smile or met by a grave silence and shake of the head more effectual and convincing than a torrent of words. Another day elapsed, and then he was firmly but politely requested not to renew his visit, his patient declaring that she had perfectly recovered, and would require no further medical attendance. His quick intelligence penetrated the shallow artifice to get rid of his importunities; but he was still gentleman enough to obey, with however bad a grace, and I daresay but for the merest accident would soon have forgotten all about the veiled portrait and its poor owner.

It happened that a few nights after he was over in a billiard room in Rose Street, having a quiet game with a friend, when in a pause his opponent chanced to say:

"By the bye, I suppose you don't know that Bob, the marker here, is an accomplished thief? There, don't start—he's a clever thief, but quite a harmless one. He is not now in the profession, and as honest a man as breathes; but what I mean is that, for the fun of the thing, or a glass of beer, he will steal anything you like from any gentleman here to show his skill—on condition, of course, that the article be afterwards returned to its owner."

Nothing more was said on the subject at the time; but though Hutton appeared to laugh heartily at the idea, the words had planted a strange thought in his mind, and before leaving he drew the marker aside, and began cautiously sounding him on the subject nearest and dearest to his own heart.

"I suppose," he said at last, "that having been a thief yourself, you will be well acquainted with the members of the fraternity—by sight, I mean, even here in Edinburgh?"

"Well acquainted?—rather!" was the knowing rejoinder, given with an expressive wink. "I know every blessed prig in Edinburgh."

"I will be candid with you," cautiously continued the student. "I have not asked without a reason. Do you think, now, that you could recommend me any one that would do a job of the kind for me?"

"What! is it possible? Do *you* want to commit a robbery!" exclaimed the marker, starting back in surprise.

"No, not exactly," was the smiling rejoinder; "but I want something done which only a thief can do, and which would certainly look like a robbery to most people. I will explain. A friend of mine has in her possession a picture which I am anxious to copy. She refuses to lend it, and all I want is to borrow it *by force* for a week or a fortnight, when it would be faithfully returned."

"Hem—seems all fair and above board," ponderingly returned the marker. "You're sure, though, that you don't mean to do a slope with the picture after all? Because, if you do, you've come to the wrong man. I would not commit a real robbery myself for any consideration, or help another to do it."

"You need have no fear on that account," haughtily returned the student. "I would not dream of retaining in my possession a thing so religiously prized by its owner. I wish to copy it—nothing more. Do you know any one who would do the job for a fair sum, faithfully and honestly?"

"Well, as to that, there's dozens would be glad of the chance," replied the marker; "but I don't think you could get a better hand than Coreing Jim, the Paisley Wire."

"And who may he be, if I may inquire?"

"Oh, he is one of The Ruffian's gang—a clever enough young cove in his way, but a little rash and reckless with his hands. However, if you were to strictly warn him against all violence,

I daresay it would come off all right—especially as you say there would be little trouble about the job."

"No trouble at all," eagerly rejoined the student. "She is an old woman, living in a poor locality, at the very top of the stair, with not another near her. The door is so flimsy and rickety that I myself could burst it in with one hand"; and then he hurriedly detailed the facts already known to the reader.

"Well, I don't mind obliging you. I'll take you to where you are likely to see the Paisley Wire," said the marker; "but mind, if anything happens, or any evil befalls the old woman, I'll peach as sure as guns; so weigh well the risk before you go a step further."

"Risk? There is no risk," blindly reasoned the student, in an impatient burst. "Besides, I'm determined to have a loan of the picture, even were it for only twenty-four hours. I believe that for masterly execution and delicate colouring there is not another such picture in Scotland."

This conversation had been carried on in whispers in the tap-room, in which there was at the time only one other person, a seedy-looking man in a faded black suit, who appeared to be fast asleep, with his head resting on a bundle of newspapers on the table near the fire. The moment the arrangement had been concluded, the student and marker left the room and house together; and then the man by the fire cautiously raised his head and disclosed the whisky-tacketed face and cunning eyes of Simon Penbank. Finding himself quite alone, he shook himself into thorough wakefulness, and gleefully rubbed his hands.

"Another for M'Indoe, and two quid for me!" he muttered with a chuckle. "Coreing Jim is a smart man, but he has now got to the end of his tether. Alas, alas! such is life—it is the fate of all to be nabbed in the end"; and with this pathetic reflection he left the place, and took his way over to M'Indoe's home in the Horse Wynd.

Meanwhile the student and the marker were making their way through some dens in Leith Street Terrace, then down to Greenside, and finally to the head-quarters in the "Happy Land," in Leith Wynd, where they were at last successful in finding the man of whom they were in search.

Coreing Jim was quite a young man, and so polite and proper-spoken that the student opened his eyes in surprise. There was no slang or brutal oaths; indeed, but for the unmistakable brand of crime written on his pallid features,

Hutton could not have believed that he was not conversing with one holding as good a position in society as himself. The very way in which he placed the rickety chairs for his visitors, spoke of better days and circumstances; but it was not that which chiefly fascinated the impulsive young student. It was the man's face. It seemed wondrously familiar in every line to the artist; and yet, think as he might, he could not remember where he had seen it, or something like it, before.

The thief listened patiently to what was required of him—to steal or forcibly borrow a picture, leaving a written note in its place, and return the same at the end of a fortnight.

"I myself can point out the stair to you," said the student in conclusion. "And you cannot mistake the house, for it is at the very top, with no other door near it."

"And you say it is a woman who owns it?"

"An old woman, and generally bedridden."

"Could she not be induced to lend the picture, or sell it you for a consideration?" inquired the thief, demurring a little. "Be sure, if it belongs to a woman—especially a poor one—there will be trouble in securing it; and if she squealed or resisted, I don't know what I might do in my passion."

"I have come to you as a last resource," quietly returned the student. "She will not lend it, or allow me to use it in any way. But I will have no violence; and unless you think you can so far command yourself to do it quietly, without laying a finger on the poor lady, or even frightening her, I will not have it done; so ponder well before you decide."

"I'll do it," said the thief, after a pause. "How much shall it be?"

"Five pounds. Will that be enough?"

"It'll do. Give me your address and the note I am to leave in its place, and you shall have the picture in three hours."

This ended the conversation. The note was written there and then, under some difficulties, and placed in the hands of the intending burglar; and then the student and the marker took their leave and made for their different homes through the dark and deserted streets; while Coreing Jim rummaged about for a few tools and a dark lantern, which he cleaned and adjusted, and disposed of in various parts of his dress. Shortly after twelve o'clock, well buttoned up, and with his cap pulled down over his brow, he slipped up the High Street on the right-hand side, in the shade, and reached the stair in Milne Square unmolested, at the precise time indeed that

M'Indoe and Penbank were lugging me in from a station at the south side, as fast as legs could carry me, with the promise of another capture in connection with The Ruffian's gang.

All was hushed and dark at the top of the stair in Milne Square, and Coreing Jim, who had removed his shoes before ascending the last flight of steps, was feeling gently the panels and fastenings of the door with a view to discovering the swiftest and least noisy mode of forcing an entrance, when, to his surprise, he found that, by some overlook on the part of the occupant, the door had been left simply on the latch. The thief could scarcely believe his good fortune, and listened breathlessly, with the door slightly ajar, for any signs of wakefulness within. A heavy slow breathing caught his ear and thrilled him with renewed hope, and a slight twinkle from the dying embers of the fire served to direct his keen glance to the veiled picture above.

"Good!" he muttered; "I'll slip in and out and she'll never be a bit the wiser till she wakes and misses it in the morning"; and in another moment he was within the room, across the floor like a dark shadow, and grasping the prize in his hands.

During this short interval, and at every step, he had listened with strange attention to the breathing of the sleeping woman; but now, while he fumbled in his pocket for the anonymous note to leave in place of the picture, a sudden flutter—a stoppage of the steady breathing and a waking sigh—caught his ear, and almost made his heart stand still. He stood there motionless as a statue, and not daring to breathe; but it was only for an instant.

The mischief was done. The eyes of the old woman were open, and staring with rousing intelligence at the dim figure against the twinkling light of the fire, and in another moment there was a great scream echoing through the room as she sprang up and threw herself upon the intruder.

"Curses on it, leave go!" he hissed, striving in vain to loosen the desperate grasp of her fingers from the picture—"leave go, I say, or it'll be worse for you."

"Never, though you should kill me on the spot," cried the poor mother, clinging to her one treasure with all her strength. "Help! help! thieves! murder! A-h-h!"

Her last exclamation was a groan, which died away in a faint sigh as she dropped like a stone unheeded on the floor. One crash of the cruel neddy had stilled her cries and loosened her grasp, and the picture dropped heavily on the floor, with

the crape veil torn away in shreds, and the beautiful gilt frame being rapidly stained and dabbled with her blood.

"She would have it," whispered Coreing Jim, in hushed and awful tones, as he listened breathlessly for any sounds of alarm from below. "Yet I'm sorry I did it, though I don't know why. Now for the picture, and then I'm off."

He stooped to grope for the picture, and in doing so turned back the slide of the dark lantern he carried; and the crape having been torn off in the struggle, the strong glare of light fell full on the beautiful picture.

But why did he start and shiver and gaze at the beautiful and innocent young features with his eyes starting from their sockets, with every nerve and muscle in his frame petrified into rigidity, and with his heart suddenly ceasing to beat within him? Why did he utter a piercing groan, as if his very heart had been torn from his breast, and sink on his knees and try to raise the poor woman in his arms, heedless of the warning tramp of footsteps below?

"My mother!" he hoarsely quivered forth. "O God! I have killed my own mother!" and then in a paroxysm of grief, he tried to kiss the oozing blood from the pale brow of the stricken woman, wildly chafing her hands in his own, and striving by every endearing term to call her back to sensibility; and for a moment it appeared as if he were likely to succeed. Mrs. Lyons opened her eyes with a faint moan, and gazed wildly in his face; but there came no recognition.

"Mother! mother!" he almost screamed. "It is Jimmy—your own wee Jim."

"My wee Jim?" she faintly and dreamily echoed. "No, no, you are not he; for he is dead—lost to God and man!" and then with a faint sigh she relapsed into insensibility; and at the same moment the door was burst open, giving entrance to Hugh M'Indoe, Penbank, and myself. I turned up the light, while the other two threw themselves on Coreing Jim, and tried to wrench him away from the wounded woman. But the thief, instead of turning and fighting like a tiger, as we had anticipated, only continued to bend over the senseless figure, wringing his hands and moaning out:

"I have killed her! I have killed her! Take me up—take me away, and hang me before all the world! I have killed her!"

"Aha!" cried Simon Penbank, perking forward and gloatingly rubbing his hands, after exhibiting two gold coins in

his palm—"You said you would do me, Mister Jim; but I think the knife has cut the wrong way. I've done you, and there's the price, in good solid gold."

But the taunt fell on dulled senses, heedless or incapable of retort; for the thief still wrung his hands and moaned:

"Take me away—I've killed her! Oh, mother, and is this the end of it all?"

M'Indoe gazed at him with widely opened eyes, but offered no remark, except to demur and hurl aside Penbank when he again advanced to taunt our prisoner; and then I slipped on a pair of handcuffs and led Coreing Jim away up to the Office, when a medical assistant was at once despatched to attend to the injured woman.

Next morning, to the surprise of all, Mrs. Lyons appeared, with her head all bound up, and supported between two women, and demanded in such a piteous strain to see the prisoner, stating as a reason that she was sure some great mistake had been committed, that her request was at last complied with; but what took place in the cell of course was known to no one. After the interview she appeared calmer, though it was evident that she had been weeping, and was accommodated with an easy seat by the fire in one of the side rooms, where she remained propped up till the hour appointed for the examination of Jim Lyons drew near. M'Indoe arrived about half-past ten, and was shown into the same room; and the moment he was made known to her, she addressed him long and earnestly in an eager whisper, clasping one of his hands in her own the while, and wetting it with her tears. As the imploring rush of words fell on the ears of the stern unflinching man, he was observed to start and question her, then to listen breathlessly, and then, when at last she said, "Remember I am his mother, and he is my only boy; have mercy on him, as you expect mercy hereafter," his hard features relaxed, and, stooping down, he reverently kissed her hand.

When the case was called, the result appeared; and it was enough to take away the breath of one even more experienced than myself. Mrs. Lyons was the first to be examined, and, after the usual oath had been administered, she was asked to look at the prisoner.

"Do you recognise that man?" asked the superintendent.

"I do; he is my son."

There was a stir and a start all over the Court as she uttered these words.

"Do you charge him with breaking into your house and committing this shocking assault upon your person?"

"I do not. Jimmy would never raise his hand against me, his own mother."

"Do you mean to tell us that he did not commit this assault?" sharply demanded the superintendent. "How did you get hurt?"

"I don't know. I have not seen him for years, and I fainted away in his arms, and when I woke I found my forehead bleeding, and a doctor binding it up."

Here the prisoner groaned aloud, and buried his face in his hands.

"Is it not true that you were once in better circumstances, and that the prisoner squandered your whole substance and left you to beggary?" inquired the superintendent, in a softened tone.

"It was all his own," was the tearful answer. "Poor Jim! he was led away by bad companions. O Sir! if you only knew all, you would not ask me to speak against him"; and then the poor, forgiving mother covered her face with her shaking hands and sobbed aloud.

The superintendent whispered for a moment with me, and then said:

"It is useless to trouble further with this witness. Bring forward Hugh M'Indoe."

The reformed thief stepped forward, while Mrs. Lyons bent forward breathlessly to listen to his evidence.

"Do you know this man?"

"I do; he is known as Coreing Jim, the Paisley Wire."

"Have you reason to believe that he last night attempted to commit a burglary at a house in Milne Square?"

"I thought so last night, but it seems I have been mistaken, and that he was only on a visit to his mother."

More cross-examination followed, but nothing could induce the hunter of thieves to reveal more. I was next examined, but of course I could only tell the truth—that I had been sought out by M'Indoe to trap another of the "Happy Land" gang, without having time to glean particulars; and that we arrived only to find the prisoner moaning over his mother's senseless form, and stating that he had killed her. The result was that the case was given up owing to the defective evidence, and the prisoner was discharged with a caution. Yes, a caution, and one that was effectual for life. Coreing Jim, I rejoice to say,

from that moment ceased to exist; but in a town a good many miles west, James Lyons sprang into life, an energetic foreman in a spinning-factory, a credit to the town, and the sole comfort and joy of his aged mother.[1]

THE SONG OF THE MINSTER

WILLIAM CANTON

When John of Fulda became Prior of Hethholme, says the old chronicle, he brought with him to the Abbey many rare and costly books—beautiful illuminated missals and psalters and portions of the Old and New Testament. And he presented rich vestments to the Minster; albs of fine linen, and copes embroidered with flowers of gold. In the west front he built two great arched windows filled with marvellous storied glass. The shrine of St. Egwin he repaired at vast outlay, adorning it with garlands in gold and silver, but the colour of the flowers was in coloured gems, and in like fashion the little birds in the nooks of the foliage. Stalls and benches of carved oak he placed in the choir; and many other noble works he had wrought in his zeal for the glory of God's house.

In all the western land was there no more fair or stately Minster than this of the Black Monks, with the peaceful township on one side, and on the other the sweet meadows and the acres of wheat and barley sloping down to the slow river, and beyond the river the clearings in the ancient forest.

But Thomas the Sub-prior was grieved and troubled in his mind by the richness and the beauty of all he saw about him, and by the Prior's eagerness to be ever adding some new work in stone, or oak, or metal, or jewels.

"Surely," he said to himself, "these things are unprofitable—less to the honour of God than to the pleasure of the eye and the pride of life and the luxury of our house! Had so much treasure not been wasted on these vanities of bright colour and carved stone, our dole to the poor of Christ might have been fourfold, and they filled with good things. But now let our

[1] *Reprinted by permission of the author's executors and the publishers, Messrs. Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., from the volume "Hunted Down." James M'Govan was also the author of "Solved Mysteries," "Brought to Bay," "Traced and Tracked," "Strange Clues," and "Criminals Caught."*

almoner do what best he may, I doubt not many a leper sleeps cold, and many a poor man goes lean with hunger."

This the Sub-prior said, not because his heart was quick with fellowship for the poor, but because he was of a narrow and gloomy and grudging nature, and he could conceive of no true service of God which was not one of fasting and praying, of joylessness and mortification.

Now you must know that the greatest of the monks and the hermits and the holy men were not of this kind. In their love of God they were blithe of heart, and filled with a rare sweetness and tranquillity of soul, and they looked on the goodly earth with deep joy, and they had a tender care for the wild creatures of wood and water. But Thomas had yet much to learn of the beauty of holiness.

Often in the bleak dark hours of the night he would leave his cell and steal into the Minster, to fling himself on the cold stones before the high altar; and there he would remain, shivering and praying, till his strength failed him.

It happened one winter night, when the thoughts I have spoken of had grown very bitter in his mind, Thomas guided his steps by the glimmer of the sanctuary lamp to his accustomed place in the choir. Falling on his knees, he laid himself on his face with the palms of his outstretched hands flat on the icy pavement. And as he lay there, taking a cruel joy in the freezing cold and the torture of his body, he became gradually aware of a sound of far-away yet most heavenly music.

He raised himself to his knees to listen, and to his amazement he perceived that the whole Minster was pervaded by a faint mysterious light, which was every instant growing brighter and clearer. And as the light increased the music grew louder and sweeter, and he knew that it was within the sacred walls. But it was no mortal minstrelsy.

The strains he heard were the minglings of angelic instruments, and the cadences of voices of unearthly loveliness. They seemed to proceed from the choir about him, and from the nave and transept and aisles; from the pictured windows and from the clerestory and from the vaulted roofs. Under his knees he felt that the crypt was throbbing and droning like a huge organ.

Sometimes the song came from one part of the Minster, and then all the rest of the vast building was silent; then the music was taken up, as it were in response, in another part; and yet again voices and instruments would blend in one indescribable

volume of harmony, which made the huge pile thrill and vibrate from roof to pavement.

As Thomas listened, his eyes became accustomed to the celestial light which encompassed him, and he saw—he could scarce credit his senses that he saw—the little carved angels of the oak stalls in the choir clashing their cymbals and playing their psalteries.

He rose to his feet, bewildered and half terrified. At that moment the mighty roll of unison ceased, and from many parts of the church there came a concord of clear high voices, like a warbling of silver trumpets, and Thomas heard the words they sang. And the words were these:

Tibi omnes Angeli.
To Thee all Angels cry aloud.

So close to him were two of these voices that Thomas looked up to the spandrels in the choir, and he saw that it was the carved angels leaning out of the spandrels that were singing. And as they sang the breath came from their stone lips white and vaporous into the frosty air.

He trembled with awe and astonishment, but the wonder of what was happening drew him towards the altar. The beautiful tabernacle work of the altar screen contained a double range of niches filled with the statues of saints and kings; and these, he saw, were singing. He passed slowly onward with his arms outstretched, like a blind man who does not know the way he is treading.

The figures on the painted glass of the lancets were singing.

The winged heads of the baby angels over the marble memorial slabs were singing.

The lions and griffons and mythical beasts of the finials were singing.

The effigies of dead abbots and priors were singing on their tombs in bay and chantry.

The figures in the frescoes on the walls were singing.

On the painted ceiling westward of the tower the verses of the Te Deum, inscribed in letters of gold above the shields of kings and princes and barons, were visible in the divine light, and the very words of these verses were singing, like living things.

And the breath of all these as they sang turned to a smoke as of incense in the wintry air, and floated about the high pillars of the Minster.

Suddenly the music ceased, all save the deep organ-drone.

Then Thomas heard the marvellous antiphon repeated in the bitter darkness outside; and that music, he knew, must be the response of the galleries of stone kings and queens, of abbots and virgin martyrs, over the western portals, and of the monstrous gargoyles along the eaves.

When the music ceased in the outer darkness, it was taken up again in the interior of the Minster.

At last there came one stupendous united cry of all the singers, and in that cry even the organ-drone of the crypt, and the clamour of the brute stones of pavement and pillar, of wall and roof, broke into words articulate. And the words were these:

Per singulos dies, benedicimus Te.
Day by day; we magnify Thee,
And we worship Thy name; ever world without end.

As the wind of the summer changes into the sorrowful wail of the yellowing woods, so the strains of joyous worship changed into a wail of supplication; and as he caught the words, Thomas too raised his voice in wild entreaty:

Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.
O Lord, have mercy upon us; have mercy upon us.

And then his senses failed him, and he sank to the ground in a long swoon.

When he came to himself all was still, and all was dark save for the little yellow flower of light in the sanctuary lamp.

As he crept back to his cell he saw with unsealed eyes how churlishly he had grudged God the glory of man's genius and the service of His dumb creatures, the metal of the hills, and the stone of the quarry, and the timber of the forest; for now he knew that at all seasons, and whether men heard the music or not, the ear of God was filled by day and by night with an everlasting song from each stone of the vast Minster:

We magnify Thee,
And we worship Thy name; ever world without end.

MR. SAMPSON

CHARLES LEE

On a moorland by-road two cottages stood under one roof. One had four rooms, the other only two—a kitchen below and a bedroom above. It was a lonely spot; the nearest house was a mile away, the nearest village twice as far. Catherine and Caroline Stevens occupied the larger dwelling; the other had been vacant for many years. The sisters owned both houses, and had a modest little income besides, which they supplemented by the sale of the produce of their poultry-yard. Catherine was fifty-five, Caroline fifty-three, and they had dwelt in this solitary place all their lives. Seniority, and a shade of difference in their temperaments, gave Catherine the rule. She was the more active of the two, and had what she humbly called a temper. Speaking in parables, she drank weak tea, while milk and water sufficed for the gentle Caroline. Catherine was the business woman. Eight o'clock on every Thursday morning saw her trudging down the road on her way to a neighbouring market town, with a basket on her arm containing eggs and perhaps a chicken or two, while Caroline, who seldom stirred abroad, stood at the gate and watched her out of sight. Caroline was on the watch again at five in the evening, to greet her on her return with the week's supply of groceries and gossip.

One Thursday she was back a full half-hour before her time. She panted as she sat down, and her eyes were bright with excitement. Caroline's pulse began to flutter.

"Sister," she said faintly, "what is 'a?"

Catherine pointed to the fireplace.

"There's somebody want to take it," she said.

"The house? Never!"

"Ess, the house. A man."

"Sister! A single man!"

"Ess. A stranger from up the country."

"Aw, Cath'rine! You didn'——"

"Ess, I did. Why not? Trust me. I know better from worse. A staid man, and his name's Isaac Sampson, and that's a good respectable name—took out of Scripture, both ends of it. And

he's to work 'pon the roads, breaking stones, and there an't no solider trade than that, I should think. And he'll pay a shilling a week, and I've took the arnest-money for the first week, and him and the furniture's coming up to-morrow. There!"

Caroline gasped.

"Cath'rine! A single man, and a foreigner! And us all alone!"

"You'm talking foolish, sister. A staid, respectable man, I tell 'e, and sixty if he's a day. You've see'd en too, and spoke to en. He passed o' Tuesday and give us the time o' day."

"There was two people passed o' Tuesday."

"This one passed in the morning."

Caroline reflected.

"Grey whiskers all round, soft black hat up to 'm, stooped a bit, and said 'marnen,' broad-like?"

"That's the chap. I reco'nised him to once when 'a spoke to me. A civiller-spoken man I never look to meet. Recommended by the butcher, too. Ess, I asked Mr. Pearse about him, and 'a said 'a was honest enough for all he knowed—and that's a deal for a man to say that kill his own meat. I'll tell 'e how 'twas."

With all its ramifications of detail and comment, the telling of the five minutes' interview in the market-place took half an hour at least. By that time the idea which at first had so terrified Caroline had grown familiar and accepted.

"P'raps if we ask him," said she, "he'll kill the chickens for us. I shan't never get over wringing the poor dear mortals' necks, not if I live to be a hundred."

It was late next evening when Mr. Sampson arrived with his possessions in a farm-cart. The sisters watched, peeping from behind the geraniums into the rainy April twilight, while the furniture was being unloaded. Evidently Mr. Sampson was no Sybarite. When a chair, a table, a bed, a box, and a miscellaneous bundle had been carried in, the empty cart drove off, and the new tenant went in and shut the door.

"My life! did 'e see?" exclaimed Catherine. "No carpet, no mats, no ornyments, not so much as a li'll picksher! A rough sort, I seem. I do 'most wish I hadn' took his shilling."

"Poor soul!" murmured Caroline. "At his age, and nobody to look after him! I'm glad we laid the fire. He'll be looking for a bit o' comfort in a strange house, and there an't no better comp'ny than a good fire, nor no worse than a black grate this wisht malincholy weather. I hope he'll light the fire."

"He'll be biling the water for his tay, I reckon," said Catherine, "so he's bound to light en."

"Cath'rine! I didn' see no kettle carr'd in!"

"Nor I nuther, come to think. P'raps 'twas in his box."

"With his Sunday clo'es! A dirty black kettle! Aw, Cath'rine!"

"Well, must be somewheres. The man must have his tay. 'Tidn' in nature for a mortal to go without tay."

"Well, I do hope he've lighted the fire. That kitchen's like a bird-cage for draughts. . . . Aw, my dear life! what was that?"

They were sitting by the fire, and out of the back of the grate came a sudden sound, a sharp double tap, twice repeated. They looked at each other in some alarm, for it seemed to be in the room with them. Then Catherine's face cleared.

"I know," she said confidently. "He's knocking his pipe agin the bars of the grate. He's a-setting there, close up to we, smoking away 'front of the fire."

"Like father used," said Caroline. "Nice and comfor'ble, with his boots off, I shouldn' wonder. There! now he's raking the fire. 'Tis 'most as if 'a was in the same room with us."

They kept silence for a while, trying to realise their new neighbour's proximity through the party wall, straining their eyes after the shadow of his company. Presently Catherine had an idea.

"How if we should rattle the fire-showl a bit?" she suggested. "'Twill seem more sociable, like."

Caroline stretched out her hand, and drew it back, reddening.

"I don't like to, somehow. It seem so—so forward, like-a-thing."

"Aw, nonsense! How's going to know we done it a-purpose? And the grate wants righting up, anyhow. Here, give it me."

She scraped up the ashes with defiant vigour, and let the shovel fall clattering.

"There! Now call your sister all the bold 'uzzies you can think for!"

Caroline smiled faintly, holding up her finger. But even if Mr. Sampson heard the signal, he was not imaginative enough to interpret its kindly meaning, and respond. It was ten minutes before they heard another sound—the double tap again.

"One more pipe, and then to bed," commented Catherine. "That was father's way."

They remained over the fire, talking a little in discreet tones, their ears ready to seize the slightest sound through the wall,

their imaginations busy with the man who sat unconscious within a few feet of them. Once he coughed, and they speculated on the sound. Was it an ordinary clearing of the throat, as Catherine maintained, or was Caroline right in detecting a hollow ring, and arguing a weakness of the chest? Once he whistled a few slow notes; they recognised a fragment of a revival hymn, and drew favourable deductions. If it had been a low pothouse song—! At last they heard once more the tap-tap of the pipe-bowl, followed immediately by the scraping of chair-legs on the bare floor.

"Just like I said!" exclaimed Catherine. "He's going to bed now. La me! 'tis nine o'clock! How quick the time have gone, to be sure!"

"I'm glad we took him in, good man," said Caroline. "It make a bit o' comp'ny don't 'a?"

Sleep was long in coming to them after the social excitements of the evening. They awoke later than usual next morning, and were only down in time to see Mr. Sampson go past on his way to work. They hurried to the gate.

"He don't stoopy so much as I thought," said Caroline. "A clever man for his age, I seem. Idn' his left-hand coat pocket plummed out, like?"

"So 'tis. Got his dinner inside, I reckon. Wonder what 'a is."

"Cath'rine! How's going to manage for his meals?"

"Dunnaw. Cook 'em himself, s'pose, same as we. And a wisht poor job 'a 'll make of it, I seem."

"Poor chap! We—we couldn' offer to cooky for 'm, s'pose?"

"Wouldn' be fitty—not till we do know him better. Pretty and foolish we'd look if 'a was to say 'No, thank 'e.'"

"P'raps he'll ask us to," said Caroline as they turned to go in.

"Aw, Catherine! If 'a haven' gone and left the door all abroad!"

"So 'a have, the careless chap! I've a mind——"

She turned about, looked warily down the road, and then marched resolutely out of the one gate and in at the other.

"What be doing, sister? Cath'rine, what be about?"

Catherine's face was set. "I'm going to geek in," she said, and went straight up to the door. A fearful fascination drew Caroline after her. Together they peeped into the room.

"There's his mug and tay-pot on the table," whispered Catherine. "I don't see no plate."

"Nor no kettle," murmured Caroline. "I'd a jealous thought

'a hadn' got no kettle. Look, he've a-bilet the water for his tay in that dinky saucepan."

"I'm going inside," Catherine announced, and stepped boldly forward. Caroline cast a nervous glance behind her, and followed.

"Here's a frying-pan, all cagged with gress; haven' been claned, not since 'twas bought, by the looks of it. He've had bacon for his brukfas'."

"Here's the piece in the cupboard—half a pound of streaky; and nothing else but the heel of a loaf."

"I claned up the floor yes'day, and now look to en! Such a muck you never behold."

"Cath'rine! We can't leave en go on this-a-way! It go to my heart to see en so."

"No more we won't. We'll come in after brukfas' and do up the place."

"But he'll know. He might be vexed."

"Don't care," said Catherine recklessly. "If he's vexed, he can take himself off. This room have got to be clane and fitty agin Sunday, and clane and fitty we'm going to make it."

One thing led to another. On his return Mr. Sampson found the house swept and garnished. The grate was polished, the fire laid; a strip of old carpet was spread before the hearth, another strip guarded the entry. A piece of muslin had been nailed across the window, and on the window-shelf stood two geranium plants, gay with scarlet blossom. The table was set for a meal, with knife, fork, mug and plate, and on the plate was an inviting brown pasty. He went upstairs, and found his bed neatly made, and a bright-coloured text pinned on the wall where it would meet his waking eyes. Mr. Sampson pondered on these things while he ate the pasty to the last crumb. Presently he went out and knocked at his neighbours' door. Catherine opened it; the other conspirator trembled in the background.

"Thank 'e, marm," said Mr. Sampson shortly.

"You'm welcome, Mr. Sampson. Anything we can do to make 'e comfor'ble——"

Mr. Sampson shifted his feet, spat respectfully behind his hand, and said nothing. Catherine gained courage.

"Won't 'e step inside?" she asked, and immediately bobbed backwards, uttering an odd little squeak, as her skirt was tugged from behind by the alarmed Caroline. Mr. Sampson stared at her in mild astonishment.

"No, thank 'e—do very well here," he said. "Pasty was capital," he added after a pause.

"Sister made it. She's gen'rally reckoned a good hand."

"Thank 'e, marm," said Mr. Sampson, raising his voice and addressing the obscure interior over Catherine's shoulder. The vague figure within responded with a flutter and an inarticulate twitter. "If you'll leave me know what's to pay——"

"We won't say nothing 'bout that, Mr. Sampson. But I was going to say—sister and me have been talking things over—and I was going to ask 'e——"

With many hesitations Catherine expounded a plan of mutual accommodation, by which she and Caroline were to cook his food and keep his rooms tidy in return for the heavier outdoor work—digging the garden, gathering fuel from the moor, and the like. A special clause stipulated for the wringing of the chickens' necks. Mr. Sampson agreed readily, and grew spasmodically confidential. Lived with a widowed sister till last year. Sister married again, and gone to live in the shires. Doing for himself ever since, and making a terrible poor job of it. Knew no more about cooking than a cow did about handling a musket. Could make shift to fry a rasher, and that was about all. Reckoned he'd do very well now, and was properly grateful to the ladies for their proposal.

"Aw, you'm kindly welcome, Mr. Sampson!" It was Caroline who spoke, close up to her sister's elbow.

"Thank 'e, marm," he replied, and Caroline shrank back into the shadows.

The arrangement worked capitally. Every evening on returning from work, Mr. Sampson found his house in order, his table laid, and something savoury warming at the fire—a broth of leeks and turnips, maybe, or maybe a potato pie. The pasty for to-morrow's "crowst" was ready in the cupboard. Having supped and digested, he would go forth and work in the garden till dusk, when he would come round to the door for a few good-night words with the sisters. Bit by bit, Caroline's maidenly tremors subsided. She gathered confidence before this mild, slow-spoken old man, and when at the end of the second week he came to pay his rent, and was invited once more by Catherine to step inside, and was politely demurring, it was the younger sister's soft "Do 'e now, Mr. Sampson," that decided him to enter.

When he had gone, they agreed that his company manners were unexceptionable. Thrice he had to be pressed to light his

pipe before he would consent, and then—what touched them most—every few minutes he bestirred his stiff joints, went to the door, and put his head outside like a real gentleman, instead of making a spittoon of their spotless fireplace. They felt safe in repeating the invitation. Soon no invitation was needed. He dropped in as a matter of course every evening at the accustomed hour, sat for the accustomed period in his accustomed chair, and bore his part in the accustomed talk. It was a wonder to Caroline that she had ever been afraid of him, now that he had come to be as much a part of the natural scheme of things as the grandfather clock that ticked in the corner by the staircase. Indeed, with his round moon-face, his slow and weighty speech, and his undeviating regularity of habits, he bore no small resemblance to that venerable timepiece. The comparison does him great honour; for "Grandf'er," as the sisters affectionately called it, held a deservedly high place in their esteem. Those who dwell in crowded marts may regard their clocks and watches as mere mechanical contrivances; but to two lone women in a solitary place, the household clock, especially if it be such a clock as Grandf'er, with his imposing seven foot of stature and his solemn visage of shining brass, is something more than a mere nest of cogs and pulleys. Such a clock is the real master of the house; he orders the comings and goings, the downsittings and uprisings of his votaries; his ponderous ticking pervades every room; when he huskily clears his throat, voices are hushed and respectful silence is kept till he has delivered his hourly message to transient mortality; the operation of winding him up is an affair of solemn ritual. It was not long before Mr. Sampson heard the history of the two outstanding events in Grandf'er's otherwise untroubled existence—the vain and impious attempt of a misguided stranger to carry him off in exchange for a paltry twenty pounds in gold, and that other episode of his frenzy, when, in the dead of night, he had a false alarm of Eternity, and struck a hundred and seventeen on end, while the sisters, called from their beds by the dread summons, hovered about him, white-robed and tearful.

The four made a comfortable and well-balanced *partie carrée*. Catherine led the talk; Mr. Sampson seconded her bravely; Caroline was the best of listeners; while Grandf'er filled the gaps, when gaps occurred, with his well-conned discourse, soothing to hear with a clear conscience at the end of a well-spent day. There was no more harmonious and happy a fireside company in all the countryside.

Then came the catastrophe. One evening—it was a Thursday, about three months after Mr. Sampson's arrival—he knocked at the door as usual. It remained shut. He tried the latch. It would not open. He called out, and Catherine's voice made answer:

"Grieved to say it, Mr. Sampson, but you can't come in."

"How? What's up with 'e?"

"I can't tell 'e, but you mustn't come in. Will 'e plaise to go away, Mr. Sampson?"

He thought it over slowly. "No," he said at last. "Not till I do know what's the matter."

"Aw dear!" There were tears in her voice. "I beg of 'e, go!"

"Not till I hear what's up," he repeated.

A murmur of agitated talk came to his ears.

"If you'll open door," he said, "you can tell me comfor'ble. I won't come in if you don't wish, but I'm bound to know what's up."

More whispering. Then a bolt was withdrawn, and the door opened an inch or two.

"Come," he said, and pushed gently. The door resisted.

"I can't look 'e in the face. If I must tell 'e, I must, but I die of shame if I look 'e in the face."

"So bad as that?"

"Worse. Worse 'n anything you could think for. Aw dear! How be I to tell 'e?"

The door threatened to close again. Mr. Sampson said nothing, but quietly set his foot in the gap between door and door-post. It was a substantial foot, substantially shod. The mere toe of it, which alone was visible within, was eloquent of masculine determination. Catherine made a desperate plunge.

"Mr. Sampson, they'm a-talking about us."

"How *us*?"

"You and we. 'Tis all over the country—scand'lous talk. Aw, that I should live to see the day!"

"If you'll kindly give me the p'tic'lars, marm," he said patiently, after a pause.

"We never thought no harm," she sobbed. "'Twas only neighbourly to offer to do for 'e, and you all alone and so helpless. I'm sure the notion never come into our heads. 'Tis a sin and shame to say such things."

"Say *what* things?"

"Say—we—we'm a-trying to catch 'e!"

The terrible word was out. The pair within awaited the result with trembling expectation. It came—first a long low whistle; then—could they believe their ears?—an unmistakable chuckle. Catherine shrank back as from the hiss of an adder. The door swung open and Mr. Sampson confronted them, his eyes a-twinkle with sober enjoyment.

"That's a stale old yarn," he said. "Heard en weeks ago. Only 'twas told *me* 'tother way about. Don't mind telling 'e I mightn' have thought of it else."

"Thought of what, Mr. Sampson?"

"Why, courting of 'e, to be sure," said the gentleman placidly.

The ladies gasped in unison.

"You don't mane to say you—you'm——" stammered Catherine at last.

"Ess, I be, though. This fortnit, come Sunday. If you'll kindly take it so, and no offence."

"But—but we never noticed nothing."

"No, s'pose. 'Tis like the cooking, you see—I'm a terrible poor hand at it. Now 'tis out. Ben't vexed, I hope."

"Aw, no! But——"

"There!" he hurried on. "Think it over, will 'e? There's the saving to consider of, you see, money and trouble both. And I've put by a pound or two. Not so young as I was, but we an't none of us that. And not so dreadful old, nuther. Wouldn' think of parting of 'e; reckon we could be pretty and comfor'ble together, the three of us, though I can't marry but one of 'e, 'course. So talk it over, will 'e? I'll be round agin to-morrow evening. Good-night."

He had reached the gate before Catherine found voice to recall him.

"Mr. Sampson! Plaise, Mr. Sampson!"

"Well, marm?" he said, slowly returning.

"Ascuse my asking, but—would 'e mind telling—telling *whichy* one you was thinking of—of courting?"

Mr. Sampson's fingers went to the back of his head.

"Now you'll be laughing upon me," he said. "Whichy one? Well, I don't know whichy one, and that's the truth. But it don't make no odds," he added cheerfully. "Settle it between yourselfs. I ben't noways p'tic'lar."

"La, Mr. Sampson! Who ever heard tell of such a thing?" cried Catherine, giggling in spite of herself.

"That's right!" he chuckled. "Laugh so much as you've a mind to. Sister laughing too?"

Caroline's nervous titter passed muster.

"Now we'm comfor'ble," he remarked. "Reckon I can step inside now, and no scandal."

In he walked, none hindering, took his usual chair, spread his hands on his knees, and beamed on the sisters.

"Ess," he continued. "I'm like the old cat in the bonfire—don't know which course to steer. Never was such a case, s'pose. I've turned it over this way, and I've rolled it over that way, and I can't come to no conclusion. Always seeing you together, you see, I can't part 'e nohow, no more than milk from water. But don't matter, as I said before. If only you'll be so kind as to settle it between yourselfs——"

"We couldn' do that," said Catherine emphatically.

"Couldn' 'e, now?" He turned inquiringly to Caroline. Caroline shook her head.

"Wouldn' be fitty," she murmured.

"Well, you do know best," said Mr. Sampson, a little dashed, and pondered, his eyes on the ground, while the sisters shot sidelong glances at him and avoided each other's looks. He lifted his head and caught Caroline's eye.

"Cath'rine's the best to manage things," said Caroline, in a hurry.

He looked hopefully at Catherine.

"Car'line's the best cook by far," she hastened to say.

Mr. Sampson thumped his knee.

"That's where 'tis!" he exclaimed. "The pair of 'e rolled up together 'ud make a complete masterpiece. A man couldn' look for a better wife than the two of 'e 'ud make. That's where 'tis, nor I don't see no way out of it—not in a Christian country. Ah!" he added meditatively. "These heathen Turks—they know a thing or two after all, don't they?"

"Mr. Sampson, I wonder at 'e!" cried Catherine, shocked at this libertine sentiment.

"'Tidn' to be thought of, I know that," he apologised. "But I can't think of no other way. Without"—he brightened—"without we should spin up a ha'penny and bide by the fall of en."

"Never in this house!" exclaimed Catherine, more shocked than ever.

"Don't see how we shouldn'," he maintained stoutly. "'Tis just the same as casting lots, and that's a good Scripture observance. The reg'lar way with these old patriarchs, so I'm given to onderstand; only 'twas shekels with them, I reckon. But shekels or ha'pennies, 'tis all one."

"If you'm sure 'tis Scriptural," said Catherine, impressed and half convinced.

"Sound Bible doctrine, my word for 'n. An't that so, marm?" he added, appealing to Caroline.

"I mind a text in Proverbs," said Caroline shyly, "which say, 'The lot causeth contentions to cease.'"

"See!" ejaculated Mr. Sampson. "That's of it! 'The lot causeth contentions to cease.' 'Tis aimed straight at our case. Out o' Proverbs, too! Old Solomon's the chap for we. See how 'a settled that argyment 'bout the baby. And there was two ladies in *that*. Well, then?"

Catherine shook her head doubtfully, but offered no further objection. Mr. Sampson produced a handful of coins, chose one with fitting deliberation, and held it up for inspection.

"Now," he announced. "If 'a should turn up the old Queen, then 'tis Cath'rine. If 'tis the young person with the prong, then Caroline's the one. And up she goes."

It was not the spin of an expert, and he failed to catch the flying coin. It fell to the ground in the dark corner by Grandf'er. Mr. Sampson went down on his hands and knees, while the sisters held their breaths.

"Well, I'm darned!"

The ladies jumped. Mr. Sampson rose slowly to his feet, holding the halfpenny at arm's length and smiling foolishly upon it.

"If it had been a lime-ash floor, now," he said.

"What's wrong?" Catherine found breath to ask.

"Fell in a crack o' the planching, my dear. Found en sticking there edge up, and no head to en, nor yet no tail. Old Solomon himself couldn' make nothing by en. But how come you to have a timbern floor to your kitchen, when mine's lime-ash?"

"'Twas father's doing when the house was built," said Caroline. "He always liked to take off his boots of a' evening, and lime-ash is that cold-natured, 'tis apt to give 'e chilblains through your stockings."

"Well, to see how things do turn out!" meditated Mr. Sampson.

"'Twas ordained, I seem," said Caroline solemnly.

"A token, sure enough," agreed Catherine. "And father's eyes upon us this very minute, I shouldn' wonder. Mr. Sampson —I doubt 'tis all foolishness, and we'd best say no more about it."

"Don't see that," said he. "If your father didn' choose

to wear slippers, that an't no lawful reason why I shouldn' get married if I want to. Must try some other way, that's all."

Again he pondered, till Caroline broke the silence with a timid suggestion.

"If," she hesitated, colouring, "if we should wait a bit, Mr. Sampson keeping away from us meanwhile, p'raps his heart 'ud speak."

"So 'a might," said the gentleman dubiously; "and then agin 'a mightn'. A mazy old organ, b'lieve."

"Absence make the heart grow fonder, so they say," remarked Catherine.

"That's very well," he replied. "Don't doubt but what 'a do. But how if 'a should make en grow fonder of both of 'e? Where'd us be then? But we'll try if you do wish, though I doubt 'tidn' much use."

Taking his leave, he paused at the door.

"All the same," he said, "I can't help wishing I'd been born a heathen Turk."

Left alone, the sisters had plenty of food for thought. They sat without speaking, and the longer they sat the harder it became to break silence. For the first time in their lives a veil of reserve was drawn between them, and every moment it thickened and darkened. At last, with a few constrained words for decency's sake, they lit their candles and went to bed. Next morning two heavy-eyed women confronted each other with mistrustful looks over the breakfast-table. The day dragged through on a minimum of conversation, in which no word of their neighbour found a place. Through the morning of the next they held no communication at all, and the air was heavy with suppressed thunder. In the afternoon Caroline set about her preparations for the usual Saturday baking. The materials were ready on the table, when Catherine came in from the garden. Her searching glance on the table hardened into a fixed glare.

"I thought as much," she said, in a tense whisper. "You've been taking those Wyandotte eggs!"

Caroline turned pale.

"S'posing I have!" she made answer at last.

Catherine raised her voice.

"You knowed very well I was going to set Toppy on those eggs to-day."

Caroline trembled and clutched the edge of the table.

"S'posing I did!" she whispered.

"Then how come you to take those eggs?"

"I—I shall take what eggs I've a mind to—so there!"

"A mean trick, so 'tis. To take my eggs, what I've been saving up for Toppy, and she as cluck as cluck can be, as you very well know, and in her box this very minute, wearing her heart out over the chaney nest-egg, poor fond little worm! Of all the mean tricks, to take my eggs——"

"Aw, you and your bistly old eggs!"

Even for a maiden attempt at scornful sarcasm it was a wretchedly poor one, and its effect was further discounted when the perpetrator instantly burst into a flood of penitential tears. The next moment they were in each other's arms.

"To think of it!" exclaimed Catherine, as their sobs subsided. "All these years with never a cross word, and now— Aw, drat the man!"

"Sister!"

"Drat the man!" she repeated, revelling in her own profanity. "Wish we'd never set eyes 'pon him. Sarve him right if we sent him 'bout his business!"

"Sister! When we'm both so good as promised to 'n! Beside, 'a wouldn' go. He's terrible obstinate, for all his quiet ways."

"A week's notice 'll settle en," said Catherine viciously.

"Cath'rine, we couldn'! Good man—to be slighted by two in one day, and turned out of house and home overplush—we couldn'!"

"It do seem hard," admitted Catherine. "But we can't go on like this, that's plain."

"P'raps he've made his ch'ice by now."

"If 'a have, 'a can't choose but one of us. And then, where'll the other be? Tell me that!"

"Sister," said Caroline, and paused, and drew a long breath. "Sister dear; I—I ben't in no p'tic'lar vi'lence to get married."

"Caroline Stevens, there's the Bible 'pon the shelf. Lay your hand to 'n, and say those words agin, if you can."

Caroline hid her face in her hands. "I can't," she faltered.

"Nor I nuther. And here we be, the two of us, geeking round the corner after one man! At our age, too! 'Tis shameful! I'm black-red all over at the thought of it. Two silly old women—that's what we be."

"Aw, *don't*, sister!" shuddered Caroline.

"Two silly old women," repeated the merciless self-abaser. "But it shan't be so. Thanks be, I got some sense left in my brain, though my heart's a caudle of foolishness. It shan't be

so. The longer he stay, the worse 'twill be, and go he shall. How couldn' 'a make up his mind 'fore speak? 'Twouldn' have happened so then."

"'Twas fo'ced upon him to speak."

"So 'a was. I mustn' be hard 'pon him. 'Tis Doom, I reckon; and better-fit Doom should tend to his battles and murders and sudden deaths, 'stead of coming and plaguing quiet, dacent folk. Well, and Doom shan't have it all his own way, nuther. There shan't be no jalous wife nor no sinful-thoughted sister-in-law, not in this locality."

"Sister, such dreadful talk!"

"'Tis my duty to speak plain. There's bound to be suffering come out of it, but anyways we can choose to suffer respectable. Go he shall."

The garden gate clicked.

"Cath'rine! Here 'a do come! And aw! if I do live, he've got his best clo'es up!"

"Then 'a *have* made up his mind after all, and he've come to tell us so. But 'tis too late now, and 'a shan't name no names, not if I can help. 'Twill be harder if we do know. Now, Car'line, you'm too soft for this job. You leave en to me, and don't say a word, and, whatever you do, don't start snooling—d'st hear? We got to be hard, or we'll never get rids of him."

The door was tapped and opened, and Mr. Sampson appeared. His hard-pressed holiday suit encased him in its rigid folds, like the stone garments of a statue; his face was one consistent solid smile; a substantial cabbage-rose adorned the lapel of his coat; and his hands—O wonder!—were mailed in enormous black kid gloves. Altogether he made a noble, if stiffish figure, worthy of any woman's affection. Catherine felt her resolution tottering. She advanced one desperate step and shot her bolt.

"Mr Sampson, you'll kindly take your week's notice from to-day."

The wide expanse of smile slowly crumbled, and as slowly heaped itself up into a round O of ineffable astonishment. Caroline began to whimper. Catherine stealthily shook her by the arm, while Mr. Sampson's eyes roved to the ceiling, the walls, and the floor, in search of symptoms of universal disintegration.

"I'm a dazy old bufflehead, I know," he began at last, "and I don't azackly seem to get to the rights o' this."

"There an't no rights to en!" cried Catherine wildly. "(*Will* 'e stop snooling, sister!) 'Tis all so wrong as can be, and time to put an end to it. Nor you mustn' ask why, for we can never tell

'e. We'm grieved to put 'e out in any way, and we'm grieved to part with 'e: but go you must, and no questions asked."

Mr. Sampson's scattered wits obeyed his summons. "If I ben't mistook," he said, not without dignity, "there was words passed between us consarning matrimony."

"Foolish words!" interjected Catherine. "Foolisher words were never spoke. They've got to be took back."

"If I ben't mistook," he continued stolidly, "I was told to go away and make up my mind—or my heart, as you may say—if so be I could."

"'Tis too late. We'll be thankful if you won't say no more about it."

"If I ben't mistook," he went on, with a corroborative glance at his festal attire, "I come here just now to say I'd come to a conformable conclusion at last. I come here to say—with doo respect to the other lady, who's good enough for anybody—I come to say I'd pitched my ch'ice on the lady I should wish to commit matrimony with. And the name of that lady——"

"Don't say the word!" cried Catherine. "'Tis hard enough already; don't 'e go to make it harder. Whichever 'tis, her answer have got to be 'No.' An't that so, Car'line?"

Caroline speechlessly assented.

"With best thanks all the same," continued Catherine in softer tones, "and hoping you won't think too hardly of us, and never shall we think other than kindly o' you, and proud we'd ha' been, ayther one of us, if it hadn' been ordained otherwise, as you'll mind I said to once when the ha'penny stood on edge, and—aw, *will* 'e go, and not stand glazing there like a stuck pig!"

Mr. Sampson stiffened his back. "Very well, marm," he replied, and began peeling off a glove. "I ben't one to fo'ce myself 'pon nobody." He attacked the other glove. "Nor I ben't going to state no grievance, nor ask no questions, nor mention no names." He rolled the gloves into a forlorn and crumpled ball.

"You'll spile 'em," said Catherine, sniffing audibly. "Give 'em here."

She took them, smoothed them out, laid them together, turned one neatly inside out over the other, and gave them back.

"Thank 'e," he said. "Bought 'em for a funeral I didn' go to; never put 'em on till to-day. Queer how things do turn out. Well, if I got to go, then the sooner the better." He took the

flower from his buttonhole and laid it on the table. "(Meant for the lady of my ch'ice, not to mention no names.) So I reckon I'll go to once." He fumbled in his pocket. "I can get a bed over to Churchtown—very good beds at the inn, so I'm told—and I'll send along for my things later on." He counted some silver out on the table. "And there's the money owing; two shilling rent for this week and next."

"Mr. Sampson——" Catherine protested through her tears. He raised an implacable hand.

"If you plaise, marm. According to the law of the land, and not wishing to be beholden to nobody. And that's about all, b'lieve. Good-bye."

"You'll shake hands 'fore go," pled Catherine.

"No, I don't think," said the unforgiving old man. "'Tis the Christian thing to do, I know; but there an't no mistake about it, I ought to have been born a heathen Turk."

Without another word he turned and went. His bent figure passed the window and disappeared.

"He'll scorn us all his life!" wailed Caroline.

"We've done what's right," said Catherine, "so don't matter what he think of us. *I* don't care, for one."

The rose caught her eye. She took it up and lifted it to her face.

"Give it me," said Caroline, dry-eyed of a sudden. "I'll take care of it."

Catherine whipped it behind her back.

"Meant for the lady of his ch'ice," she said. "Maybe you think——"

"I've so much right as you to think——"

They held each other's eyes, and gentle Caroline's look was as hard as her sister's. But the crisis passed as quickly as it had come—with Caroline in a fresh flood, with Catherine in a resolute stamp of the foot.

"It shan't be so!" she declared. Going to the fire, she opened the top of the grate and dropped the flower within. It shrivelled and vanished.

"And there's an end to en," she said. "Dust and ashes. And now, sister, snooling won't help us, but work will, or so they say else. Time to pitch baking; come, bustle."

DO SEEK THEIR MEAT FROM GOD

C. G. D. ROBERTS

One side of the ravine was in darkness. The darkness was soft and rich, suggesting thick foliage. Along the crest of the slope tree-tops came into view—great pines and hemlocks of the ancient unviolated forest—revealed against the orange disc of a full moon just rising. The low rays slanting through the moveless tops lit strangely the upper portion of the opposite steep,—the western wall of the ravine, barren, unlike its fellow, bossed with great rocky projections, and harsh with stunted junipers. Out of the sluggish dark that lay along the ravine as in a trough, rose the brawl of a swollen, obstructed stream.

Out of a shadowy hollow behind a long white rock, on the lower edge of that part of the steep which lay in the moonlight, came softly a great panther. In common daylight his coat would have shown a warm fulvous hue, but in the elvish decolourising rays of that half hidden moon he seemed to wear a sort of spectral grey. He lifted his smooth round head to gaze on the increasing flame, which presently he greeted with a shrill cry. That terrible cry, at once plaintive and menacing, with an undertone like the fierce protestations of a saw beneath the file, was a summons to his mate, telling her that the hour had come when they should seek their prey. From the lair behind the rock, where the cubs were being suckled by their dam, came no immediate answer. Only a pair of crows, that had their nest in a giant fir-tree across the gulf, woke up and croaked harshly their indignation. These three summers past they had built in the same spot, and had been nightly awakened to vent the same rasping complaints.

The panther walked restlessly up and down, half a score of paces each way, along the edge of the shadow, keeping his wide-open green eyes upon the rising light. His short, muscular tail twitched impatiently, but he made no sound. Soon the breadth of confused brightness had spread itself further down the steep, disclosing the foot of the white rock, and the bones and antlers of a deer which had been dragged thither and devoured.

By this time the cubs had made their meal, and their dam was ready for such enterprise as must be accomplished ere her

own hunger, now grown savage, could hope to be assuaged. She glided supplely forth into the glimmer, raised her head, and screamed at the moon in a voice as terrible as her mate's. Again the crows stirred, croaking harshly; and the two beasts, noiselessly mounting the steep, stole into the shadows of the forest that clothed the high plateau.

The panthers were fierce with hunger. These two days past their hunting had been well-nigh fruitless. What scant prey they had slain had for the most part been devoured by the female; for had she not those small blind cubs at home to nourish, who soon must suffer at any lack of hers? The settlements of late had been making great inroads on the world of ancient forest, driving before them the deer and smaller game. Hence the sharp hunger of the panther parents, and hence it came that on this night they hunted together. They purposed to steal upon the settlement in their sleep, and take tribute of the enemies' flocks.

Through the dark of the thick woods, here and there pierced by the moonlight, they moved swiftly and silently. Now and again a dry twig would snap beneath the discreet and padded footfalls. Now and again, as they rustled some low tree, a pewee or a nuthatch would give a startled chirp. For an hour the noiseless journeying continued, and ever and anon the two grey, sinuous shapes would come for a moment into the view of the now well-risen moon. Suddenly there fell upon their ears, far off and faint, but clearly defined against the vast stillness of the Northern forest, a sound which made those stealthy hunters pause and lift their heads. It was the voice of a child crying,—crying long and loud, hopelessly, as if there were no one by to comfort it. The panthers turned aside from their former course and glided toward the sound. They were not yet come to the outskirts of the settlement, but they knew of a solitary cabin lying in the thick of the woods a mile and more from the nearest neighbour. Thither they bent their way, fired with fierce hope. Soon would they break their bitter fast.

Up to noon of the previous day the lonely cabin had been occupied. Then its owner, a shiftless fellow, who spent his days for the most part at the corner tavern three miles distant, had suddenly grown disgusted with a land wherein one must work to live, and had betaken himself with his seven-year-old boy to seek some more indolent clime. During the long lonely days when his father was away at the tavern the little boy had been wont to visit the house of the next neighbour, to play with a

child of some five summers, who had no other playmate. The next neighbour was a prosperous pioneer, being master of a substantial frame house in the midst of a large and well-tilled clearing. At times, though rarely, because it was forbidden, the younger child would make his way by a rough wood road to visit his poor disreputable playmate. At length it had appeared that the five-year-old was learning unsavoury language from the elder boy, who rarely had an opportunity of hearing speech more desirable. To the bitter grief of both children, the companionship had at length been stopped by unalterable decree of the master of the frame house.

Hence it had come to pass that the little boy was unaware of his comrade's departure. Yielding at last to an eager longing for that comrade, he had stolen away late in the afternoon, traversed with endless misgivings the lonely stretch of wood road, and reached the cabin only to find it empty. The door, on its leathern hinges, swung idly open. The one room had been stripped of its few poor furnishings. After looking in the rickety shed, whence darted two wild and hawklike chickens, the child had seated himself on the hacked threshold, and sobbed passionately with a grief that he did not fully comprehend. Then seeing the shadows lengthen across the tiny clearing, he had grown afraid to start for home. As the dusk gathered, he had crept trembling into the cabin, whose door would not stay shut. When it grew quite dark, he crouched in the inmost corner of the room, desperate with fear and loneliness, and lifted up his voice piteously. From time to time his lamentations would be choked by sobs, or he would grow breathless, and in the terrifying silence would listen hard to hear if anyone or anything were coming. Then again would the shrill childish wailings arise, startling the unexpectant night, and piercing the forest depths, even to the ears of those great beasts which had set forth to seek their meat from God.

The lonely cabin stood some distance, perhaps a quarter of a mile, back from the highway connecting the settlements. Along this main road a man was plodding wearily. All day he had been walking, and now as he neared home his steps began to quicken with anticipation of rest. Over his shoulder projected a double-barrelled fowling-piece, from which was slung a bundle of such necessities as he had purchased in town that morning. It was the prosperous settler, the master of the frame house. His mare being with foal, he had chosen to make the tedious journey on foot.

The settler passed the mouth of the wood road leading to the cabin. He had gone perhaps a furlong beyond, when his ears were startled by the sound of a child crying in the woods. He stopped, lowered his burden to the road, and stood straining ears and eyes in the direction of the sound. It was just at this time that the two panthers also stopped, and lifted their heads to listen. Their ears were keener than those of the man, and the sound had reached them at a greater distance.

Presently the settler realised whence the cries were coming. He called to mind the cabin; but he did not know the cabin's owner had departed. He cherished a hearty contempt for the drunken squatter; and on the drunken squatter's child he looked with small favour, especially as a playmate for his own boy. Nevertheless he hesitated before resuming his journey.

"Poor little devil!" he muttered, half in wrath. "I reckon his precious father's drunk down at 'the Corners,' and him crying for loneliness!" Then he reshouldered his burden and strode on doggedly.

But louder, shriller, more hopeless and more appealing, arose the childish voice, and the settler paused again, irresolute, and with deepening indignation. In his fancy, he saw the steaming supper his wife would have awaiting him. He loathed the thought of retracing his steps, and then stumbling a quarter of a mile through the stumps and bog of the wood road. He was foot-sore as well as hungry, and he cursed the vagabond squatter with serious emphasis; but in that wailing was a terror which would not let him go on. He thought of his own little one left in such a position, and straightway his heart melted. He turned, dropped his bundle behind some bushes, grasped his gun, and made speed back for the cabin.

"Who knows," he said to himself, "but that drunken idiot has left his youngster without a bite to eat in the whole miserable shanty? Or maybe he's locked out, and the poor little beggar's half scared to death. *Sounds* as if he was scared"; and at this thought the settler quickened his pace.

As the hungry panthers drew near the cabin, and the cries of the lonely child grew clearer, they hastened their steps, and their eyes opened to a wider circle, flaming with a greener fire. It would be thoughtless superstition to say the beasts were cruel. They were simply keen with hunger, and alive with the eager passion of the chase. They were not ferocious with any anticipation of battle, for they knew the voice was the voice of a child, and something in the voice told them the

child was solitary. Theirs was no hideous or unnatural rage, as it is the custom to describe it. They were but seeking with the strength, the cunning, the deadly swiftness given them to that end, the food convenient for them. On their success in accomplishing that for which nature had so exquisitely designed them depended not only their own, but the lives of their blind and helpless young, now whimpering in the cave on the slope of the moon-lit ravine. They crept through a wet alder thicket, bounded lightly over the ragged brush fence, and paused to reconnoitre on the edge of the clearing, in the full glare of the moon. At the same moment the settler emerged from the darkness of the wood-road on the opposite side of the clearing. He saw the two great beasts, heads down and snouts thrust forward, gliding towards the open cabin door.

For a few moments the child had been silent. Now his voice rose again in pitiful appeal, a very ecstasy of loneliness and terror. There was a note in the cry that shook the settler's soul. He had a vision of his own boy, at home with his mother, safe-guarded from even the thought of peril. And here was this little one left to the wild beasts! "Thank God! Thank God I came!" murmured the settler, as he dropped on one knee to take a surer aim. There was a loud report (not like the sharp crack of a rifle), and the female panther, shot through the loins, fell in a heap, snarling furiously and striking with her forepaws.

The male walked around her in fierce and anxious amazement. Presently, as the smoke lifted, he discerned the settler kneeling for a second shot. With a high screech of fury, the lithe brute sprang upon his enemy, taking a bullet full in his chest without seeming to know he was hit. Ere the man could slip in another cartridge the beast was upon him, bearing him to the ground and fixing keen fangs in his shoulder. Without a word, the man set his strong fingers desperately into the brute's throat, wrenched himself partly free, and was struggling to rise, when the panther's body collapsed upon him all at once, a dead weight which he easily flung aside. The bullet had done its work just in time.

Quivering from the swift and dreadful contest, bleeding profusely from his mangled shoulder, the settler stepped up to the cabin door and peered in. He heard sobs in the darkness.

"Don't be scared, sonny," he said, in a reassuring voice. "I'm going to take you home along with me. Poor little lad, *I'll* look after you if folks that ought to don't."

Out of the dark corner came a shout of delight, in a voice which made the settler's heart stand still. "*Daddy*, daddy," it said, "I *knew* you'd come. I was so frightened when it got dark!" And a little figure launched itself into the settler's arms, and clung to him trembling. The man sat down on the threshold and strained the child to his breast. He remembered how near he had been to disregarding the far-off cries, and great beads of sweat broke out upon his forehead.

Not many weeks afterwards the settler was following the fresh trail of a bear which had killed his sheep. The trail led him at last along the slope of a deep ravine, from whose bottom came the brawl of a swollen and obstructed stream. In the ravine he found a shallow cave, behind a great white rock. The cave was plainly a wild beast's lair, and he entered circumspectly. There were bones scattered about, and on some dry herbage in the deepest corner of the den, he found the dead bodies, now rapidly decaying, of two small panther cubs.

THE ESSENCE OF A MAN

ALAN SULLIVAN

THROUGH level lines of streaming snow, a huge figure loomed large and portentous. Vanishing in blinding gusts, it ever and ever appeared again, thrusting itself onward with dogged persistence. Across flat and frozen plains forged the great piston-like legs, driving down his snowshoes with a clocklike regularity that suggested, rather than told of, enormous muscular force. Behind him, knee-deep, toiled five yellow-coated, black-muzzled dogs, their shoulders jammed tight into their collars, their tawny sides rippling with the play of straining tendons; and, last of all, a long, low toboggan lurched indomitably on, the trampled trail breaking into a surge of powdered snow under its curving bow.

Into the teeth of the gale pushed this pigmy caravan—a gale that was born on the flat shores of Hudson Bay, that breasted the slopes of the Height of Land, that raged across the blank white expanse of Lac Seul, and was now shrieking down, dire and desolate, to the ice-bound and battlemented borders of Lake Superior. It was a wind that had weight.

Tom Moore felt its vast and impalpable force, as he leaned against it, when he stopped for breath. It assaulted him—it tore steadily, relentlessly, at him, as if seeking to devour—it lashed the stinging grains into his face, and into the open mouths of his panting dogs—it smoothed out the crumpled trail as the wake of a ship is obliterated by closing waters—till, a moment after his passing, the snow ridges lay trackless and unruffled. Still, however insignificant in these formless wastes, that silent progress held steadily on; and so it had held from early morn. These black specks on a measureless counterpane, guided by some unfailing instinct that lurked far back in the big half-breed's brain, were making an unswerving line for a wooded point that thrust out a faint and purple finger, far ahead in the gathering dusk. As they drew slowly in, the wind began to abate its force, and Tom, peering out from the mass of ice that was cemented to his mouth and eyes, looked for some sheltering haven. The dogs smelled the land, and more eagerly flung themselves into the taut traces, while over them gathered the shadows of the welcome woods.

Peter Anderson, the Hudson Bay factor at Lac Seul, was low in provisions, and had sent to the Ignace post a curt suggestion that the deficiency be supplied; and Tom Moore's laden toboggan was the brief but practical answer to his letter. The three-hundred-pound load was made up of the bare necessities of life—pork, flour, and the like; these, delivered, would be worth seventy-five cents a pound and thirty dollars a sack respectively; and Tom was the arbiter of transportation. In summer his canoe thrust its delicate bows through the waterways that interlaced the two posts, and in winter his snowshoes threaded the stark and frozen wilderness. He had always travelled alone on the ice. Nature had moulded him with such a titan frame, so huge and powerful a body, so indomitable and fearless a soul, that he had become accustomed to laughing at the fate that overtook many of his tribe. They disappeared every now and then, utterly, silently, and mysteriously; but ever Big Tom moved on, the incarnation of force and of life that mocked at death.

When, two days before, MacPherson had summoned him to the Ignace post, and pointed to the pile of provisions, and said laconically: "For Anderson, at Lac Seul," Tom had merely grunted, "How," and set out to harness his dogs. But the last day had brought him more serious reflection. By the flight

of the goose it was two hundred miles and by the winter trail perhaps two hundred and fifteen; and of these forty now lay behind him.

He made his camp, he lit his fire, he flung to each ravenous dog a frozen whitefish, and ate, himself, almost as sparingly; then, rolled in his rabbit-skin blanket, he lay down on his back, and looked up at the winking stars.

About midnight the wind changed and veered into the south-east, bringing with it a clammy drizzle, half snow, half rain, that plastered the trees with a transparent enamel, and spread over the surface of the earth a sheet of ice, half an inch thick, and exceeding sharp.

In that shivering hour which heralds the dawn, a branch cracked sharply a little distance from the camp. One of the dogs twitched an ear, and Tom was too deep in sleep to notice it. The five huskies were buried in snow beneath a tree, from a branch of which swung a sheaf of rigid fish, suspended in the air for security. But, in the half light, something moved, a something that turned upon the smouldering fire great luminous eyes—globes that seemed to receive the glow of dull coals, and give it out again in a changing iridescence. Around the eyes was a white-grey mask, crowned by short, black-pointed ears; behind the ears moved noiselessly a tawny body, with heavy legs and broad, soft pads. It slipped from tree to tree, touching the ground lightly here and there, till the great lynx hung, motionless and menacing, above the sleeping camp. It stopped, sniffed the tainted air, and then stared, fascinated, at the sheaf of fish, which hung, slowly revolving, in tantalising proximity. Silently, with dainty and delicate caution, the lynx laid itself out on the branch, and, clinging tight, stretched out a curved forepaw; it just touched its object, and set it swaying. Again the paw went out, and again fell short. A quicker thrust, and the big pads slipped on the frozen wood, and, with a scream, the great cat fell fair on the sleeping dogs.

In an instant the air split with a frenzy of noise. Tom sprang up, and saw a maelstrom of yellow forms, a convulsive, contorted mass, from which came the vicious snap of locking jaws, the yelp of agonised animals, and the short, coughing bark of the lynx. Around and in and out they rolled, buried in fur and snow. The wolf was born again in the huskies, and, with all their primal ferocity, they assailed each other and a common enemy. Two of them crawled away, licking great wounds from deadly claws; and then gradually the battle waned, till it died

in a fugue of howls, and the marauder escaped, torn and bleeding, into the silence from which he came.

Tom stood helpless, and then, when the three came limping home, went over to where his two best dogs lay, licking great gashes—for the lynx had literally torn them open. As he approached, they lifted their black lips, till the long fangs shone, ivory white; and death and defiance gurgled in their throbbing throats. A glance told him that nothing could be done; the frost was already nipping the raw flesh till they snapped at their own vitals in desperation. He raised his axe, once, twice—and his two best huskies lay on a blanket of blood-stained snow, with twitching bodies and glazing eyes.

Then, very soberly, he examined the others. They were still fit for harness; so, in the yellow light that began to flood the world, he shortened his traces, twisted his feet into his toe straps, and, with never a look behind, faced again the burden of the day.

The trail was hard to break. The crust, that would not carry the dogs, was smashed down, and tilted cakes of ice fell over on his shoes, a deck load that made them a weariness to lift. Behind floundered the toiling huskies, the leader's nose glued to the tail of the trailing shoes. What vast reserve of strength did man and beast then draw upon, Tom could not have told you; but, hour after hour, the small, indomitable train went on. As the day lengthened, Tom shortened his stride; for the dogs were evidently giving out, and his thigh muscles were burning like hot wires. At four o'clock the team stopped dead, the leader swaying in his tracks. The big half-breed, running his hands over the shaking body, suddenly found one of them warm and wet—it was sticky with blood. Then he saw blood on the trail; looking back, he saw crimson spots as far as the eye could distinguish them; lifting the matted hide, he revealed a gash from which oozed great, slow drops. The valiant brute had drained his life out in a gory baptism of that killing trail. Then Tom sat down in dumb despair, took the lean yellow head upon his knees, smoothed the tawny fur back from those clouding eyes, and set his teeth hard as the dying beast licked his caressing hand in mute fidelity.

The great frame grew rigid as he watched, and slowly into the man's mind, for the first time in all his life, came doubt. Perhaps it was more of wonderment. It was not any suggestion of failing powers, imminent danger, or impending hardships; it was rather a mute questioning of things which he had always

heretofore accepted, as he did the rising and sinking of the sun —things which began and ended with the day. His reasonings were slow and laborious; his mind creaked, as it were, with the effort—like an unused muscle, it responded with difficulty. Then, finally, he saw it all.

Long ago, when his mother died, she had warned him against the false new gods which the white man had brought from the big sea water, and in her old faith had turned her face to the wall of her teepee. She had been buried in a tree top, near a bend of the Albany River, where it turns north from Nepigon and runs through the spruce forests that slope down to Hudson's Bay. But Tom had listened to the new story—more than that, he had hewed square timber for the Mission Church at Ignace; and now—retribution had come, at last. No sooner had the idea formulated itself, than it seized upon him; and then there rose to meet it—defiance. Grimly, he slackened the collar from the dead husky, and laid the empty traces across his own breast; savagely he thrust forward, and started the toboggan, and the diminished company stayed and stopped not till, once again, the darkness came.

That night the two surviving dogs eyed him furtively, when he flung them their food. They did not devour it ravenously, as was their custom; but crouched, with the fish under their paws, and followed, with shifting look, every move he made. He was too weary to care; but, had he watched them an hour later, the sight would have convinced him that there was an evil spirit abroad in those frosty woods.

Noiselessly, they approached his sleeping form, sniffing intently at everything in the camp. He lay, massive and motionless, wrapped in an immense rabbit-skin blanket, one fold of which was thrown over the bag that held his provisions; his giant body was slack, relaxed, and full of great weariness.

The dogs moved without a sound, till they stood over the sleeping man. The long hair rose in ridges along their spines, as they put their noses to his robe, and sniffed at their unconscious master; for, whether it was the fight with the lynx, or that yellow body out on the ice, some new and strange thing had come into their blood; they had reverted to the primal dog, and no longer felt the burden of the collar or the trace—the labour of the trail had passed from them.

At first, the smell of man repelled them, but it was only for a moment; their lean shoulders swayed as their twitching noses ran over his outline, and then a new scent assailed them. It

was the provision bag. Gently, and with infinite precaution, they pulled it. Tom stirred, but only stirred. The sack was trailed out over the snow, and the tough canvas soon gave way before those murderous teeth. In silence, and in hunger, they gorged; what they could not eat was destroyed, till, finally, with bulging sides, they lay down and slept, in utter repletion.

It was the sun on his face that woke Tom to a consciousness of what had happened. He felt for the bag, and, finding it not, looked at the dogs, and, on seeing them, raised his hand in anger. Now, this was a mistake; few dogs will wait for punishment, least of all a half-savage husky who expects it. He approached, they retreated; he stopped, they squatted on their haunches and eyed him suspiciously; he retreated, they did not move; he held out a fish, they were supremely indifferent. They had entered a new world, which was none of his; they suddenly found that they did not have to obey—and when man or beast reasons thus, it spells ruin. All his arts were exhausted and proved fruitless, and then Tom knew that an evil spirit—a Wendigo—was on his trail.

To push forward was his first instinct. Slowly, he rolled up the blanket, and laced it to the toboggan; and, as the sun topped the rim of the land, the unconquerable breed struck out across the ice, the traces tugging at his shoulders. A few yards behind followed the enfranchised team, drunk with the intoxication of their new-found liberty. Never did he get within striking distance, but ever he was conscious of those soft, padding sounds; he felt as if they were always about to spring at his defenceless back, but all through the weary day they followed, elusive, mysteriously threatening.

He pulled up, faint with hunger, in mid-afternoon, and went into a thicket of cedar to set rabbit snares; but no sooner had he turned than the dogs were at the toboggan. A ripping of canvas caught his ear, and he rushed back in fury. They fled at his approach, and lay, flat on the snow, their heads between their paws; so Tom pulled up his load, built a fire beside it, and watched the huskies till morning. He had now one hundred miles to go; he had three hundred pounds to pull, and no dogs; he could not, dare not sleep; and he had no food, but —Anderson was waiting at Lac Seul.

Who can enter into those next days? Through the storms—and they were many—moved a gigantic figure, and, after it, crawled a long coffin-like shape; and behind the shape trotted two wolfish forms, with lean flanks and ravenous jaws. Across

the crystalline plains plodded the grim procession, and, at night, the red eye of a camp fire flung its flickering gleam on those same threatening forms, as they moved restlessly and noiselessly about, watching and waiting, waiting and watching. As his strength diminished with the miles, Tom began to see strange things, and hear curious and pleasant sounds. Then he got very sleepy; the snow was just the colour of the twenty-dollar blankets in the H. B. post; it was not cold now; he experienced a delicious languor; and people began to talk all around him; only they wouldn't answer when he shouted at them. Then the Wendigo came, and told him to lie down and rest, and, as he was taking off his shoes, another spirit called out:

"Kago, kago—nebowah neepah panemah."

("Don't, don't! You will find rest by and by.")

At noon, on the eighth day after Tom left Ignace post, Peter Anderson looked across the drifts of Lac Seul, and shook his head. The horizon was blotted out in a blizzard that whipped the flakes into his face like needle points, and the distance dissolved in a whirling view. The bush had been cleared away around his buildings, and, in the bare space, a mighty wind swooped and shrieked. As he turned, the gale lifted for a moment, and, infinitely remote, something appeared to break the snow line at the end of a long white lane of dancing wreaths; then the storm closed down, and the vision was lost. Keenly, he strained through half-closed lids; once more something stirred, and, suddenly, the wind began to slacken. In the heart of it was staggering a giant shape, that swayed and tottered, but doggedly, almost unconsciously, moved on into the shelter of the land; behind trailed a formless mass, and, last of all, the apparitions of two lank, limping dogs.

Drunkenly and unseeingly, but with blind, indomitable purpose, the man won every agonising step. His snow-shoes were smashed to a shapeless tangle of wood and sinew; his face was gaunt, patched with grey blots of frost-bite; and, through his sunken cheeks, the high bones stood out like knuckles on a clenched fist. Ice was plastered on his cap, and lay fringed on brow and lids, but beneath them burned eyes that glowed with dull fires, quenchless and abysmal. By infinitesimal degrees he drew in, with not a wave of the hand, not a sign of recognition. Up the path, from shore to trading post, shouldered the titan figure, till it reached the door. At the latch, stiff, frozen fingers were fumbling, as Anderson flung it open; and then a vast bulk darkened the threshold, swung in

helpless hesitation for a fraction of time, and pitched, face foremost, on the rough pine floor.

A few hours later, he looked up from the pile of skins upon which Anderson had rolled him. His eyes wandered to the figure of the trader, who sat, serenely smoking, regarding with silent satisfaction a small mountain of provisions.

"All here, boss?"

"Ay, Tom, all here, and I'm muckle obliged to ye; are ye hungry, Tom? Will ye hae a bit sup?"

"No eat for five days; pull toboggan. No dogs."

Anderson stiffened where he sat. "What's that? Haulin' three hunder' of grub, and ye were starving? Ye big copper-coloured fule!"

"No packer's grub, boss; Hudson Bay grub!"

It was almost a groan, for Tom was far spent.

Involuntarily the quiet Scot lifted his hands in amazement, and then hurried into his kitchen, murmuring, as he disappeared: "Man, man, it's with the likes of ye that the Hudson Bay keeps its word."

A PAIR OF HANDS

AN OLD MAID'S GHOST-STORY

SIR A. T. QUILLER-COUCH

"YES," said Miss Le Petyt, gazing into the deep fireplace and letting her hands and her knitting lie for the moment idle in her lap. "Oh, yes, I have seen a ghost. In fact I have lived in a house with one for quite a long time."

"How you *could*——!" began one of my host's daughters; and "*You*, Aunt Emily?" cried the other at the same moment.

Miss Le Petyt, gentle soul, withdrew her eyes from the fireplace and protested with a gay little smile. "Well, my dears, I am not quite the coward you take me for. And, as it happens, mine was the most harmless ghost in the world. In fact"—and here she looked at the fire again—"I was quite sorry to lose her."

"It was a woman, then? Now *I* think," said Miss Blanche, "that female ghosts are the horridest of all. They wear little

shoes with high red heels, and go about *tap, tap,* wringing their hands."

"This one wrung her hands, certainly. But I don't know about the high red heels, for I never saw her feet. Perhaps she was like the Queen of Spain, and hadn't any. And as for the hands, it all depends *how* you wring them. There's an elderly shopwalker at Knightsbridge, for instance——"

"Don't be prosy, dear, when you know that we're just dying to hear the story."

Miss Le Petyt turned to me with a small deprecating laugh. "It's such a little one."

"The story or the ghost?"

"Both."

And this was Miss Le Petyt's story:

"It happened when I lived down in Cornwall, at Tresillack on the south coast. Tresillack was the name of the house, which stood quite alone at the head of a coombe, within sound of the sea but without sight of it; for though the coombe led down to a wide open beach, it wound and twisted half a dozen times on its way, and its overlapping sides closed the view from the house, which was advertised as 'secluded.' I was very poor in those days. Your father and all of us were poor then, as I trust, my dears, you will never be; but I was young enough to be romantic and wise enough to like independence, and this word 'secluded' took my fancy.

"The misfortune was that it had taken the fancy, or just suited the requirements, of several previous tenants. You know, I dare say, the kind of person who rents a secluded house in the country? Well, yes, there are several kinds; but they seem to agree in being odious. No one knows where they come from, though they soon remove all doubt about where they're 'going to,' as the children say. 'Shady' is the word, is it not? Well, the previous tenants of Tresillack (from first to last a bewildering series) had been shady with a vengeance.

"I knew nothing of this when I first made application to the landlord, a solid yeoman inhabiting a farm at the foot of the coombe, on a cliff overlooking the beach. To him I presented myself fearlessly as a spinster of decent family and small but assured income, intending a rural life of combined seemliness and economy. He met my advances politely enough, but with an air of suspicion which offended me. I began by disliking him for it: afterwards I set it down as an unpleasant feature

in the local character. I was doubly mistaken. Farmer Hosking was slow-witted, but as honest a man as ever stood up against hard times; and a more open and hospitable race than the people on that coast I never wish to meet. It was the caution of a child who had burnt his fingers, not once but many times. Had I known what I afterwards learned of Farmer Hosking's tribulations as landlord of a 'secluded country residence,' I should have approached him with the bashfulness proper to my suit and faltered as I undertook to prove the bright exception in a long line of painful experiences. He had bought the Tresillack estate twenty years before—on mortgage, I fancy—because the land adjoined his own and would pay him for tillage. But the house was a nuisance, an incubus; and had been so from the beginning.

"'Well, miss,' he said, 'you're welcome to look over it; a pretty enough place, inside and out. There's no trouble about keys, because I've put in a housekeeper, a widow-woman, and she'll show you round. With your leave I'll step up the coombe so far with you, and put you in your way.' As I thanked him he paused and rubbed his chin. 'There's one thing I must tell you, though. Whoever takes the house must take Mrs. Carkeek along with it.'

"'Mrs. Carkeek?' I echoed dolefully. 'Is that the housekeeper?'

"'Yes: she was wife to my late hind. I'm sorry, miss,' he added, my face telling him no doubt what sort of woman I expected Mrs. Carkeek to be; 'but I had to make it a rule after—after some things that happened. And I dare say you won't find her so bad. Mary Carkeek's a sensible, comfortable woman, and knows the place. She was in service there to Squire Kendall when he sold up and went: her first place it was.'

"'I may as well see the house, anyhow,' said I dejectedly. So we started to walk up the coombe. The path, which ran beside a little chattering stream, was narrow for the most part, and Farmer Hosking, with an apology, strode on ahead to beat aside the brambles. But whenever its width allowed us to walk side by side I caught him from time to time stealing a shy inquisitive glance under his rough eyebrows. Courteously though he bore himself, it was clear that he could not sum me up to his satisfaction or bring me square with his notion of a tenant of his 'secluded country residence.'

"I don't know what foolish fancy prompted it, but about halfway up the coombe I stopped short and asked:

" ' There are no ghosts, I suppose? '

" It struck me, a moment after I had uttered it, as a supremely silly question; but he took it quite seriously. ' No; I never heard tell of any *ghosts*.' He laid a queer sort of stress on the word. ' There's always been trouble with servants, and maids' tongues will be runnin'. But Mary Carkeek lives up there alone, and she seems comfortable enough.'

" We walked on. By-and-by he pointed with his stick. ' It don't look like a place for ghosts, now, do it? '

" Certainly it did not. Above an untrimmed orchard rose a terrace of turf scattered with thorn-bushes, and above this a terrace of stone, upon which stood the prettiest cottage I had ever seen. It was long and low and thatched; a deep verandah ran from end to end. Clematis, Banksia roses and honeysuckle climbed the posts of this verandah, and big blooms of the Maréchal Niel were clustered along its roof, beneath the lattices of the bedroom windows. The house was small enough to be called a cottage, and rare enough in features and in situation to confer distinction on any tenant. It suggested what in those days we should have called ' elegant ' living. And I could have clapped my hands for joy.

" My spirits mounted still higher when Mrs. Carkeek opened the door to us. I had looked for a Mrs. Gummidge, and I found a healthy middle-aged woman with a thoughtful but contented face, and a smile which, without a trace of obsequiousness, quite bore out the farmer's description of her. She was a comfortable woman; and while we walked through the rooms together (for Mr. Hosking waited outside) I ' took to ' Mrs. Carkeek. Her speech was direct and practical; the rooms, in spite of their faded furniture, were bright and exquisitely clean; and somehow the very atmosphere of the house gave me a sense of well-being, of feeling at home and cared for; yes, *of being loved*. Don't laugh, my dears; for when I've done you may not think this fancy altogether foolish.

" I stepped out into the verandah, and Farmer Hosking pocketed the pruning-knife which he had been using on a bush of jasmine.

" ' This is better than anything I had dreamed of,' said I.

" ' Well, miss, that's not a wise way of beginning a bargain, if you'll excuse me.'

" He took no advantage, however, of my admission; and we struck the bargain as we returned down the coombe to his farm, where the hired chaise waited to convey me back to the

market town. I had meant to engage a maid of my own, but now it occurred to me that I might do very well with Mrs. Carkeek. This, too, was settled in the course of the next day or two, and within the week I had moved into my new home.

"I can hardly describe to you the happiness of my first month at Tresillack; because (as I now believe) if I take the reasons which I had for being happy, one by one, there remains over something which I cannot account for. I was moderately young, entirely healthy; I felt myself independent and adventurous; the season was high summer, the weather glorious, the garden in all the pomp of June, yet sufficiently unkempt to keep me busy, give me a sharp appetite for meals, and send me to bed in that drowsy stupor which comes of the odours of earth. I spent the most of my time out of doors, winding up the day's work as a rule with a walk down the cool valley, along the beach and back.

"I soon found that all housework could be safely left to Mrs. Carkeek. She did not talk much; indeed her only fault (a rare one in housekeepers) was that she talked too little, and even when I addressed her seemed at times unable to give me her attention. It was as though her mind strayed off to some small job she had forgotten, and her eyes wore a listening look, as though she waited for the neglected task to speak and remind her. But as a matter of fact she forgot nothing. Indeed, my dears, I was never so well attended to in my life.

"Well, that is what I'm coming to. That, so to say, is just *it*. The woman not only had the rooms swept and dusted, and my meals prepared to the moment. In a hundred odd little ways this orderliness, these preparations, seemed to read my desires. Did I wish the roses renewed in a bowl upon the dining-table, sure enough at the next meal they would be replaced by fresh ones. Mrs. Carkeek (I told myself) must have surprised and interpreted a glance of mine. And yet I could not remember having glanced at the bowl in her presence. And how on earth had she guessed the very roses, the very shapes and colours I had lightly wished for? This is only an instance, you understand. Every day, and from morning to night, I happened on others, each slight enough, but all together bearing witness to a ministering intelligence as subtle as it was untiring.

"I am a light sleeper, as you know, with an uncomfortable knack of waking with the sun and roaming early. No matter how early I rose at Tresillack, Mrs. Carkeek seemed to have prevented me. Finally I had to conclude that she arose and

dusted and tidied as soon as she judged me safely a-bed. For once, finding the drawing-room (where I had been sitting late) 'redded up' at four in the morning, and no trace of a plate of raspberries which I had carried thither after dinner and left overnight, I determined to test her, and walked through to the kitchen, calling her by name. I found the kitchen as clean as a pin, and the fire laid, but no trace of Mrs. Carkeek. I walked upstairs and knocked at her door. At the second knock a sleepy voice cried out, and presently the good woman stood before me in her nightgown, looking (I thought) very badly scared.

"'No,' I said, 'it's not a burglar. But I've found out what I wanted, that you do your morning's work over night. But you mustn't wait for me when I choose to sit up. And now go back to your bed like a good soul, whilst I take a run down to the beach.'

"She stood blinking in the dawn. Her face was still white.

"'O miss,' she gasped, 'I made sure you must have seen something!'

"'And so I have,' I answered, 'but it was neither burglars nor ghosts.'

"'Thank God!' I heard her say as she turned her back to me in her grey bedroom—which faced the north. And I took this for a carelessly pious expression and ran downstairs thinking no more of it.

"A few days later I began to understand.

"The plan of Tresillack house (I must explain) was simplicity itself. To the left of the hall as you entered was the dining-room; to the right the drawing-room, with a boudoir beyond. The foot of the stairs faced the front door, and beside it, passing a glazed inner door, you found two others right and left, the left opening on the kitchen, the right on a passage which ran by a store-cupboard under the bend of the stairs to a neat pantry with the usual shelves and linen-press, and under the window (which faced north) a porcelain basin and brass tap. On the first morning of my tenancy I had visited this pantry and turned the tap, but no water ran. I supposed this to be accidental. Mrs. Carkeek had to wash up glass ware and crockery, and no doubt Mrs. Carkeek would complain of any failure in the water supply.

"But the day after my surprise visit (as I called it) I had picked a basketful of roses, and carried them into the pantry as a handy place to arrange them in. I chose a china bowl and went to fill it at the tap. Again the water would not run.

"I called Mrs. Carkeek. 'What is wrong with this tap?' I asked. 'The rest of the house is well enough supplied.'

"'I don't know, miss. I never use it.'

"'But there must be a reason; and you must find it a great nuisance washing up the plates and glasses in the kitchen. Come around to the back with me, and we'll have a look at the cisterns.'

"'The cisterns 'll be all right, miss. I assure you I don't find it a trouble.'

"But I was not to be put off. The back of the house stood but ten feet from a wall which was really but a stone face built against the cliff cut away by the architect. Above the cliff rose the kitchen garden, and from its lower path we looked over the wall's parapet upon the cisterns. There were two—a very large one, supplying the kitchen and the bathroom above the kitchen; and a small one, obviously fed by the other, and as obviously leading, by a pipe which I could trace, to the pantry. Now the big cistern stood almost full, and yet the small one, though on a lower level, was empty.

"'It's as plain as daylight,' said I. 'The pipe between the two is choked.' And I clambered on to the parapet.

"'I wouldn't, miss. The pantry tap is only cold water, and no use to me. From the kitchen boiler I get it hot, you see.'

"'But I want the pantry water for my flowers.' I bent over and groped. 'I thought as much!' said I, as I wrenched out a thick plug of cork and immediately the water began to flow. I turned triumphantly on Mrs. Carkeek, who had grown suddenly red in the face. Her eyes were fixed on the cork in my hand. To keep it more firmly wedged in its place somebody had wrapped it round with a rag of calico print; and, discoloured though the rag was, I seemed to recall the pattern (a lilac sprig). Then, as our eyes met, it occurred to me that only two mornings before Mrs. Carkeek had worn a print gown of that same sprigged pattern.

"I had the presence of mind to hide this very small discovery, sliding over it some quite trivial remark; and presently Mrs. Carkeek regained her composure. But I own I felt disappointed in her. It seemed such a paltry thing to be disingenuous over. She had deliberately acted a fib before me; and why? Merely because she preferred the kitchen to the pantry tap. It was childish. 'But servants are all the same,' I told myself. 'I must take Mrs. Carkeek as she is; and, after all, she is a treasure.'

"On the second night after this, and between eleven and twelve o'clock, I was lying in bed and reading myself sleepy over a novel of Lord Lytton's, when a small sound disturbed me. I listened. The sound was clearly that of water trickling; and I set it down to rain. A shower (I told myself) had filled the water-pipes which drained the roof. Somehow I could not fix the sound. There was a water pipe against the wall just outside my window. I rose and drew up the blind.

"To my astonishment no rain was falling; no rain had fallen. I felt the slate window-sill; some dew had gathered there—no more. There was no wind, no cloud: only a still moon high over the eastern slope of the coombe, the distant plash of waves, and the fragrance of many roses. I went back to bed and listened again. Yes, the trickling sound continued, quite distinct in the silence of the house, not to be confused for a moment with the dull murmur of the beach. After a while it began to grate on my nerves. I caught up my candle, flung my dressing-gown about me, and stole softly downstairs.

"Then it was simple. I traced the sound to the pantry. 'Mrs. Carkeek has left the tap running,' said I: and, sure I found it so—a thin trickle steadily running to waste in the porcelain basin. I turned off the tap, went contentedly back to my bed, and slept——

"——for some hours. I opened my eyes in darkness, and at once knew what had awakened me. The tap was running again. Now it had shut easily in my hand, but not so easily that I could believe it had slipped open again of its own accord. 'This is Mrs. Carkeek's doing,' said I; and am afraid I added 'Drat Mrs. Carkeek!'

"Well there was no help for it: so I struck a light, looked at my watch, saw that the hour was just three o'clock, and descended the stairs again. At the pantry door I paused. I was not afraid—not one little bit. In fact the notion that anything might be wrong had never crossed my mind. But I remember thinking, with my hand on the door, that if Mrs. Carkeek were in the pantry I might happen to give her a severe fright.

"I pushed the door open briskly. Mrs. Carkeek was not there. But something *was* there, by the porcelain basin—something which might have sent me scurrying upstairs two steps at a time, but which as a matter of fact held me to the spot. My heart seemed to stand still—so still! And in the

stillness I remember setting down the brass candlestick on a tall nest of drawers beside me.

"Over the porcelain basin and beneath the water trickling from the tap I saw two hands.

"That was all—two small hands, a child's hands. I cannot tell you how they ended.

"No; they were not cut off. I saw them quite distinctly: just a pair of small hands and the wrists, and after that—nothing. They were moving briskly—washing themselves clean. I saw the water trickle and splash over them—not *through* them—but just as it would on real hands. They were the hands of a little girl, too. Oh, yes, I was sure of that at once. Boys and girls wash their hands differently. I can't just tell you what the difference is, but it's unmistakable.

"I saw all this before my candle slipped and fell with a crash. I had set it down without looking—for my eyes were fixed on the basin—and had balanced it on the edge of the nest of drawers. After the crash, in the darkness there, with the water running, I suffered some bad moments. Oddly enough, the thought uppermost with me was that I *must* shut off that tap before escaping. I *had* to. And after a while I picked up all my courage, so to say, between my teeth, and with a little sob thrust out my hand and did it. Then I fled.

"The dawn was close upon me: and as soon as the sky reddened I took my bath, dressed and went downstairs. And there at the pantry door I found Mrs. Carkeek, also dressed, with my candlestick in her hand.

"'Ah!' said I, 'you picked it up.'

"Our eyes met. Clearly Mrs. Carkeek wished me to begin, and I determined at once to have it out with her.

"'And you knew all about it. That's what accounts for your plugging up the cistern.'

"'You saw . . .?' she began.

"'Yes, yes. And you must tell me all about it—never mind how bad. Is——is it—murder?'

"'Law bless you, miss, whatever put such horrors in your head?'

"'She was washing her hands.'

"'Ah, so she does, poor dear! But—murder! And dear little Miss Margaret, that wouldn't go to hurt a fly!'

"'Miss Margaret?'

"'Eh, she died at seven year. Squire Kendall's only daughter;

and that's over twenty year ago. I was her nurse, miss, and I know—diphtheria it was; she took it down in the village.'

"'But how do you know it is Margaret?'

"'Those hands—why, how could I mistake, that used to be her nurse?'

"'But why does she wash them?'

"'Well, miss, being always a dainty child—and the housework, you see——'

"I took a long breath. 'Do you mean to tell me that all this tidying and dusting——' I broke off. 'Is it *she* who has been taking this care of me?'

"Mrs. Carkeek met my look steadily.

"'Who else, miss?'

"'Poor little soul!'

"'Well now'—Mrs. Carkeek rubbed my candlestick with the edge of her apron—'I'm so glad you take it like this. For there isn't really nothing to be afraid of—is there?' She eyed me wistfully. 'It's my belief she loves you, miss. But only to think what a time she must have had with the others!'

"'The others?' I echoed.

"'The other tenants, miss: the ones afore you.'

"'Were they bad?'

"'They was awful. Didn't Farmer Hosking tell you? They carried on fearful—one after another, and each one worse than the last.'

"'What was the matter with them? Drink?'

"'Drink, miss, with some of 'em. There was the Major—he used to go mad with it, and run about the coombe in his nightshirt. Oh, scandalous! And his wife drank too—that is, if she ever *was* his wife. Just think of that tender child washing up after their nasty doings!'

"I shivered.

"'But that wasn't the worst, miss—not by a long way. There was a pair here—from the colonies, or so they gave out—with two children, a boy and gel, the eldest scarce six. Poor mites!'

"'Why, what happened?'

"'They beat those children, miss—your blood would boil! *and* starved, *and* tortured 'em, it's my belief. You could hear their screams, I've been told, away back in the high-road, and that's the best part of half a mile. Sometimes they was locked up without food for days together. But it's my belief that little

Miss Margaret managed to feed them somehow. Oh, I can see her, creeping to the door and comforting!'

"'But perhaps she never showed herself when these awful people were here, but took to flight until they left.'

"'You didn't never know her, miss. The brave she was! She'd have stood up to lions. She've been here all the while: and only to think what her innocent eyes and ears must have took in! There was another couple——' Mrs. Carkeek sunk her voice.

"'Oh, hush!' said I, 'if I'm to have any peace of mind in this house!'

"'But you won't go, miss? She loves you, I know she do. And think what you might be leaving her to—what sort of tenant might come next. For she can't go. She've been here ever since her father sold the place. He died soon after. You mustn't go!'

"Now I had resolved to go, but all of a sudden I felt how mean this resolution was.

"'After all,' said I, 'there's nothing to be afraid of.'

"'That's it, miss; nothing at all. I don't even believe it's so very uncommon. Why, I've heard my mother tell of farm-houses where the rooms were swept every night as regular as clockwork, and the floors sanded, and the pots and pans scoured, and all while the maids slept. They put it down to the piskies; but we know better, miss, and now we've got the secret between us we can lie easy in our beds, and if we hear anything, say "God bless the child!" and go to sleep.'

"'Mrs. Carkeek,' said I, 'there's only one condition I have to make.'

"'What's that?'

"'Why, that you let me kiss you.'

"'Oh, you dear!' said Mrs. Carkeek as we embraced: and this was as close to familiarity as she allowed herself to go in the whole course of my acquaintance with her.

"I spent three years at Tresillack, and all that while Mrs. Carkeek lived with me and shared the secret. Few women, I dare to say, were ever so completely wrapped around with love as we were during those three years. It ran through my waking life like a song: it smoothed my pillow, touched and made my table comely, in summer lifted the heads of the flowers as I passed, and in winter watched the fire with me and kept it bright.

"'Why did I ever leave Tresillack?' Because one day, at

the end of five years, Farmer Hosking brought me word that he had sold the house—or was about to sell it; I forget which. There was no avoiding it, at any rate; the purchaser being a Colonel Kendall, a brother of the old Squire.

"'A married man?' I asked.

"'Yes, miss; with a family of eight. As pretty children as ever you see, and the mother a good lady. It's the old home to Colonel Kendall.'

"'I see. And that is why you feel bound to sell.'

"'It's a good price, too, that he offers. You mustn't think but I'm sorry enough——'

"'To turn me out? I thank you, Mr. Hosking; but you are doing the right thing.'

"Since Mrs. Carkeek was to stay, the arrangement lacked nothing of absolute perfection—except, perhaps, that it found no room for me.

"'*She*—Margaret—will be happy,' I said; 'with her cousins, you know.'

"'Oh yes, miss, she will be happy, sure enough,' Mrs. Carkeek agreed.

"So when the time came I packed up my boxes, and tried to be cheerful. But on the last morning, when they stood corded in the hall, I sent Mrs. Carkeek upstairs upon some poor excuse, and stepped alone into the pantry.

"'Margaret!' I whispered.

"There was no answer at all. I had scarcely dared to hope for one. Yet I tried again, and, shutting my eyes this time, stretched out both hands and whispered:

"'Margaret!'

"And I will swear to my dying day that two little hands stole and rested—for a moment only—in mine."

THE STORY OF A PIEBALD HORSE

W. H. HUDSON

THIS is all about a piebald. People there are like birds that come down in flocks, hop about chattering, gobble up their seed, then fly away, forgetting what they have swallowed. I love not to scatter grain for such as these. With you, friend, it is different. Others may laugh if they like at the old man of many stories, who puts all things into his copper memory. I can laugh, too, knowing that all things are ordered by destiny; otherwise I might sit down and cry.

The things I have seen! There was the piebald that died long ago; I could take you to the very spot where his bones used to lie bleaching in the sun. There is a nettle growing on the spot. I saw it yesterday. What important things are these to remember and talk about! Bones of a dead horse and a nettle; a young bird that falls from its nest in the night and is found dead in the morning: puffballs blown about by the wind: a little lamb left behind by the flock bleating at night amongst the thorns and thistles, where only the fox or wild dog can hear it! Small matters are these, and our lives, what are they? And the people we have known, the men and women who have spoken to us and touched us with warm hands—the bright eyes and red lips! Can we cast these things like dead leaves on the fire? Can we lie down full of heaviness because of them, and sleep and rise in the morning without them? Ah, friend!

Let us to the story of the piebald. There was a cattle-marking at neighbour Sotelo's estancia, and out of a herd of three thousand head we had to part all the yearlings to be branded. After that, dinner and a dance. At sunrise we gathered, about thirty of us; all friends and neighbours to do the work. Only with us came one person nobody knew. He joined us when we were on our way to the cattle; a young man, slender, well-formed, of pleasing countenance and dressed as few could dress in those days. His horse also shone with silver trappings. And what an animal! Many horses have I seen in this life, but never one with such a presence as this young stranger's piebald.

Arrived at the herd, we began to separate the young animals, the men riding in couples through the cattle, so that each calf

when singled out could be driven by two horsemen, one on each side, to prevent it from doubling back. I happened to be mounted on a demon with a fiery mouth—there was no making him work, so I had to leave the parters and stand with little to do, watching the yearlings already parted, to keep them from returning to the herd.

Presently neighbour Chapaco rode up to me. He was a good-hearted man, well-spoken, half Indian and half Christian; but he also had another half, and that was devil.

"What! neighbour Lucero, are you riding on a donkey or a goat, that you remain here doing boy's work?"

I began telling him about my horse, but he did not listen; he was looking at the parters.

"Who is that young stranger?" he asked.

"I see him to-day," I replied, "and if I see him again to-morrow then I shall have seen him twice."

"And in what country of which I have never heard did he learn cattle-parting?" said he.

"He rides," I answered, "like one presuming on a good horse. But he is safe, his fellow-worker has all the danger."

"I believe you," said Chapaco. "He charges furiously and hurls the heifer before his comrade, who has all the work to keep it from doubling, and all the danger, for at any moment his horse may go over it and fall. This our young stranger does knowingly, thinking that no one here will resent it. No, Lucero, he is presuming more on his long knife than on his good horse."

Even while we spoke, the two we were watching rode up to us. Chapaco saluted the young man, taking off his hat, and said: "Will you take me for a partner, friend?"

"Yes; why not, friend?" returned the other; and together the two rode back to the herd.

Now I shall watch them, said I to myself, to see what this Indian devil intends doing. Soon they came out of the herd driving a very small animal. Then I knew what was coming. "May your guardian angel be with you to avert a calamity, young stranger!" I exclaimed. Whip and spur those two came towards me like men riding a race and not parting cattle. Chapaco kept close to the calf, so that he had the advantage, for his horse was well trained. At length he got a little ahead, then, quick as lightning, he forced the calf round square before the other. The piebald struck it full in the middle, and fell because it had to fall. But, Saints in Heaven! why did not the

rider save himself? Those who were watching saw him throw up his feet to tread his horse's neck and leap away; nevertheless man, horse, and calf came down together. They ploughed the ground for some distance, so great had been their speed, and the man was under. When we picked him up he was senseless, the blood flowing from his mouth. Next morning, when the sun rose and God's light fell on the earth, he expired.

Of course, there was no dancing that night. Some of the people, after eating, went away; others remained sitting about all night, talking in low tones, waiting for the end. A few of us were at his bedside watching his white face and closed eyes. He breathed, and that was all. When the sunlight came over the world he opened his eyes, and Sotelo asked him how he did. He took no notice, but presently his lips began to move, though they seemed to utter no sound. Sotelo bent his ear down to listen. "Where does she live?" he asked. He could not answer —he was dead.

"He seemed to be saying many things," Sotelo told us, "but I understood only this—'Tell her to forgive me . . . I was wrong. She loved him from the first. . . . I was jealous and hated him. . . . Tell Elaria not to grieve—Anacleto will be good to her.' Alas! my friends, where shall I find his relations to deliver this dying message to them?"

The Alcalde came that day and made a list of the dead man's possessions, and bade Sotelo take charge of them till the relations could be found. Then, calling all the people together, he bade each person cut on his whip-handle and on the sheath of his knife the mark branded on the flank of the piebald, which was in shape like a horse-shoe with a cross inside, so that it might be shown to all strangers, and made known through the country until the dead man's relations should hear of it.

When a year had gone by, the Alcalde told Sotelo that, all inquiries having failed, he could now take the piebald and the silver trappings for himself. Sotelo would not listen to this, for he was a devout man and coveted no person's property, dead or alive. The horse and things, however, still remained in his charge.

Three years later I was one afternoon sitting with Sotelo, taking maté, when his herd of dun mares were driven up. They came galloping and neighing to the corral and ahead of them, looking like a wild horse, was the piebald, for no person ever mounted him.

"Never do I look on that horse," I remarked, "without

remembering the fatal marking, when its master met his death."

"Now you speak of it," said he, "let me inform you that I am about to try a new plan. That noble piebald and all those silver trappings hanging in my room are always reproaching my conscience. Let us not forget the young stranger we put under ground. I have had many masses said for his soul's repose, but that does not quite satisfy me. Somewhere there is a place where he is not forgotten. Hands there are, perhaps, that gather wild flowers to place them with lighted candles before the image of the Blessed Virgin; eyes there are that weep and watch for his coming. You know how many travellers and cattle-drovers going to Buenos Ayres from the south call for refreshment at the *pulperia*. I intend taking the piebald and trying him every day at the gate there. No person calling will fail to notice the horse, and some day perhaps some traveller will recognise the brand on its flank and will be able to tell us what department and what estancia it comes from."

I did not believe anything would result from this, but said nothing, not wishing to discourage him.

Next morning the piebald was tied up at the gate of the *pulperia*, at the road side, only to be released again when night came, and this was repeated every day for a long time. So fine an animal did not fail to attract the attention of all strangers passing that way, still several weeks went by and nothing was discovered. At length, one evening, just when the sun was setting, there appeared a troop of cattle driven by eight men. It had come a great distance, for the troop was a large one—about nine hundred head—and they moved slowly, like cattle that had been many days on the road. Some of the men came in for refreshments; then the store-keeper noticed that one remained outside leaning on the gate.

"What is the capatas doing that he remains outside?" said one of the men.

"Evidently he has fallen in love with that piebald," said another, "for he cannot take his eyes off it."

At length the capatas, a young man of good presence, came in and sat down on a bench. The others were talking and laughing about the strange things they had all been doing the day before; for they had been many days and nights on the road, only nodding a little in their saddles, and at length becoming delirious from want of sleep, they had begun to act like men that are half-crazed.

"Enough of the delusions of yesterday," said the capatas, who had been silently listening to them, "but tell me, boys, am I in the same condition to-day?"

"Surely not!" they replied. "Thanks to those horned devils being so tried and footsore, we all had some sleep last night."

"Very well then," said he, "now you have finished eating and drinking, go back to the troop, but before you leave look well at that piebald tied at the gate. He that is not a cattle-drover may ask, 'How can my eyes deceive me?' but I know that a crazy brain makes us see many strange things when the drowsy eyes can only be held open with the fingers."

The men did as they were told, and when they had looked well at the piebald, they all shouted out, "He has the brand of the estancia de Silva on his flank, and no counter-brand—claim the horse, capatas, for he is yours." And after that they rode away to the herd.

"My friend," said the capatas to the storekeeper, "will you explain how you came possessed of this piebald horse?"

Then the other told him everything, even the dying words of the young stranger, for he knew all.

The capatas bent down his head, and covering his face shed tears. Then he said, "And you died thus, Torcuato, amongst strangers! From my heart I have forgiven you the wrong you did me. Heaven rest your soul, Torcuato; I cannot forget that we were once brothers. I, friend, am that Anacleto of whom he spoke with his last breath."

Sotelo was then sent for, and when he arrived and the *pulperia* was closed for the night, the capatas told his story, which I will give you in his own words, for I was also present to hear him. This is what he told us:

I was born on the southern frontier. My parents died when I was very small, but Heaven had compassion on me and raised up one to shelter me in my orphanhood. Don Loreto Silva took me to his estancia on the Sarandi, a stream half a day's journey from Tandil, towards the setting sun. He treated me like one of his own children, and I took the name of Silva. He had two other children, Torcuato, who was about the same age as myself, and his daughter, Elaria, who was younger. He was a widower when he took charge of me, and died when I was still a youth. After his death we moved to Tandil, where we had a house close to the little town; for we were all minors, and the property had been left to be equally divided between

is when we should be of age. For four years we lived happily together; then when we were of age we preferred to keep the property undivided. I proposed that we should go and live on the estancia, but Torcuato would not consent, liking the place where we were living best. Finally, not being able to persuade him, I resolved to go and attend to the estancia myself. He said that I could please myself and that he should stay where he was with Elaria. It was only when I told Elaria of these things that I knew how much I loved her. She wept and implored me not to leave her.

"Why do you shed tears, Elaria?" I said; "is it because you love me? Know, then, that I also love you with all my heart, and if you will be mine, nothing can ever make us unhappy. Do not think that my absence at the estancia will deprive me of this feeling which has ever been growing up in me."

"I do love you, Anacleto," she replied, "and I have also known of your love for a long time. But there is something in my heart which I cannot impart to you; only I ask you, for the love you bear me, do not leave me, and do not ask me why I say this to you."

After this appeal I could not leave her, nor did I ask her to tell me her secret. Torcuato and I were friendly, but not as we had been before this difference. I had no evil thoughts of him; I loved him and was with him continually; but from the moment I announced to him that I had changed my mind about going to the estancia, and was silent when he demanded the reason, there was a something in him which made it different between us. I could not open my heart to him about Elaria, and sometimes I thought that he also had a secret which he had no intention of sharing with me. This coldness did not, however, distress me very much, so great was the happiness I now experienced, knowing that I possessed Elaria's love. He was much away from the house, being fond of amusements, and he had also begun to gamble. About three months passed in this way, when one morning Torcuato, who was saddling his horse to go out, said, "Will you come with me, to-day, Anacleto?"

"I do not care to go," I answered.

"Look, Anacleto," said he; "once you were always ready to accompany me to a race or dance or cattle-marking. Why have you ceased to care for these things? Are you growing devout before your time, or does my company no longer please you?"

"It is best to tell him everything and done with secrets," said I to myself, and so replied:

"Since you ask me, Torcuato, I will answer you frankly. It is true that I now take less pleasure than formerly in these pastimes; but you have not guessed the reason rightly."

"What then is this reason of which you speak?"

"Since you cannot guess it," I replied, "know that it is love."

"Love for whom?" he asked quickly, and turning very pale.

"Do you need ask? Elaria," I replied.

I had scarcely uttered the name before he turned on me full of rage.

"Elaria!" he exclaimed. "Do you dare tell me of love for Elaria! But you are only a blind fool, and do not know that I am going to marry her myself."

"Are you mad, Torcuato, to talk of marrying your sister?"

"She is no more my sister than you are my brother," he returned. "I," he continued, striking his breast passionately, "am the only child of my father, Loreto Silva. Elaria, whose mother died in giving her birth, was adopted by my parents. And because she is going to be my wife, I am willing that she should have a share of the property; but you, a miserable foundling, why were you lifted up so high? Was it not enough that you were clothed and fed till you came to man's estate? Not a hand's-breadth of the estancia land should be yours by right, and now you presume to speak of love for Elaria."

My blood was on fire with so many insults, but I remembered all the benefits I had received from his father, and did not raise my hand against him. Without more words he left me. I then hastened to Elaria and told her what had passed.

"This," I said, "is the secret you would not impart to me. Why, when you knew these things, was I kept in ignorance?"

"Have pity on me, Anacleto," she replied, crying. "Did I not see that you two were no longer friends and brothers, and this without knowing of each other's love? I dared not open my lips to you or to him. It is always a woman's part to suffer in silence. God intended us to be poor, Anacleto, for we were both born of poor parents, and had this property never come to us, how happy we might have been!"

"Why do you say such things, Elaria? Since we love each other, we cannot be unhappy, rich or poor."

"Is it a little matter," she replied, "that Torcuato must be our bitter enemy? But you do not know everything. Before Torcuato's father died, he said he wished his son to marry

me when we came of age. When he spoke about it we were sitting together by his bed."

"And what did you say, Elaria?" I asked, full of concern.

"Torcuato promised to marry me. I only covered my face, and was silent, for I loved you best even then, though I was almost a child, and my heart was filled with grief at his words. After we came here, Torcuato reminded me of his father's words. I answered that I did not wish to marry him, that he was only a brother to me. Then he said that we were young and he could wait until I was of another mind. This is all I have to say; but how shall we three live together any longer? I cannot bear to part from you, and every moment I tremble to think what may happen when you two are together."

"Fear nothing," I said. "To-morrow morning you can go to spend a week at some friend's house in the town; then I will speak to Torcuato, and tell him that since we cannot live in peace together we must separate. Even if he answers with insults I shall do nothing to grieve you, and if he refuses to listen to me, I shall send some person we both respect to arrange all things between us."

This satisfied her, but as evening approached she grew paler, and I knew she feared Torcuato's return. He did not, however, come back that night. Early next morning she was ready to leave. It was an easy walk to the town, but the dew was heavy on the grass, and I saddled a horse for her to ride. I had just lifted her to the saddle when Torcuato appeared. He came at great speed, and throwing himself off his horse, advanced to us. Elaria trembled and seemed ready to sink upon the earth to hide herself like a partridge that has seen the hawk. I prepared myself for insults and perhaps violence. He never looked at me; he only spoke to her.

"Elaria," he said, "something has happened—something that obliges me to leave this house and neighbourhood at once. Remember when I am away that my father, who cherished you and enriched you with his bounty, and who also cherished and enriched this ingrate, spoke to us from his dying bed and made me promise to marry you. Think what his love was; do not forget that his last wish is sacred; and that Anacleto has acted a base, treacherous part in trying to steal you from me. He was lifted out of the mire to be my brother and equal in everything except this. He has got a third part of my inheritance—let that satisfy him; your own heart, Elaria, will tell you that a marriage with him would be a crime before God and

man. Look not for my return to-morrow nor for many days. But if you two begin to laugh at my father's dying wishes, look for me, for then I shall not delay to come back to you, Elaria, and to you, Anacleto. I have spoken."

He then mounted his horse and rode away. Very soon we learned the cause of his sudden departure. He had quarrelled over his cards and in a struggle that followed had stabbed his adversary to the heart. He had fled to escape the penalty. We did not believe that he would remain long absent; for Torcuato was very young, well off, and much liked, and this was, moreover, his first offence against the law. But time went on and he did not return, nor did any message from him reach us, and we at last concluded that he had left the country. Only now after four years have I accidentally discovered his fate through seeing his piebald horse.

After he had been absent over a year, I asked Elaria to become my wife. "We cannot marry till Torcuato returns," she said. "For if we take the property that ought to have been all his, and at the same time disobey his father's dying wish, we shall be doing an evil thing. Let us take care of the property till he returns to receive it all back from us; then, Anacleto, we shall be free to marry."

I consented, for she was more to me than lands and cattle. I put the estancia in order and leaving a trustworthy person in charge of everything I invested my money in fat bullocks to resell in Buenos Ayres, and in this business I have been employed ever since. From the estancia I have taken nothing, and now it must all come back to us—his inheritance and ours. This is a bitter thing and will give Elaria great grief.

Thus ended Anacleto's story, and when he had finished speaking and still seemed greatly troubled in his mind, Sotelo said to him, "Friend, let me advise you what to do. You will now shortly be married to the woman you love and probably some day a son will be born to you. Let him be named Torcuato, and let Torcuato's inheritance be kept for him. And if God gives you no son, remember what was done for you and for the girl you are going to marry, when you were orphans and friendless, and look out for some unhappy child in the same condition, to protect and enrich him as you were enriched."

"You have spoken well," said Anacleto. "I will report your words to Elaria, and whatever she wishes done that will I do."

So ends my story, friend. The cattle-drover left us that night and we saw no more of him. Only before going he gave the piebald and the silver trappings to Sotelo. Six months after his visit, Sotelo also received a letter from him to say that his marriage with Elaria had taken place; and the letter was accompanied with a present of seven cream-coloured horses with black manes and hoofs.

THE CREATURES

WALTER DE LA MARE

It was the ebbing light of evening that recalled me out of my story to a consciousness of my whereabouts. I dropped the squat little red book to my knee and glanced out of the narrow and begrimed oblong window. We were skirting the eastern coast of cliffs, to the very edge of which a ploughman, stumbling along behind his two great horses, was driving the last of his dark furrows. In a cleft far down between the rocks a cold and idle sea was soundlessly laying its frigid garlands of foam. I stared over the flat stretch of waters, then turned my head, and looked with a kind of suddenness into the face of my one fellow-traveller.

He had entered the carriage, all but unheeded, yet not altogether unresented, at the last country station. His features were a little obscure in the fading daylight that hung between our four narrow walls, but apparently his eyes had been fixed on my face for some little time.

He narrowed his lids at this unexpected confrontation, jerked back his head, and cast a glance out of his mirky glass at the bit of greenish-bright moon that was struggling into its full brilliance above the dun, swelling uplands.

"It's a queer experience, railway-travelling," he began abruptly, in a low, almost deprecating voice, drawing his hand across his eyes. "One is cast into a passing privacy with a fellow-stranger and then is gone." It was as if he had been patiently awaiting the attention of a chosen listener.

I nodded, looking at him. "*That* privacy, too," he ejaculated, "all that!" My eyes turned towards the window again: bare, thorned, black January hedge, inhospitable salt coast, flat

waste of northern water. Our engine-driver promptly shut off his steam, and we slid almost noiselessly out of sight of sky and sea into a cutting.

"It's a desolate country," I ventured to remark.

"Oh, yes, 'desolate'!" he echoed a little wearily. "But what always frets me is the way we have of arrogating to ourselves the offices of judge, jury, and counsel all in one. For my part, I never forget it—the futility, the presumption. It *leads* nowhere. We drive in—into all this silence, this—this 'forsakenness,' this dream of a world between her lights of day and night time. Consciousness! . . . What restless monkeys men are!" He recovered himself, swallowed his indignation with an obvious gulp. "As if," he continued, in more chastened tones—"as if that other gate were not for ever ajar, into God knows what of peace and mystery." He stooped forward, lean, darkened, objurgatory. "Don't we *make* our world? Isn't *that* our blessed, our betrayed responsibility?"

I nodded, and ensconced myself, like a dog in straw, in the basest of all responses to a rare, even if eccentric, candour—caution.

"Well," he continued, a little wearedly, "that's the indictment. Small wonder if it will need a trumpet to blare us into that last 'Family Prayers.' Then perhaps a few solitaries—just a few—will creep out of their holes and fastnesses, and draw mercy from the merciful on the cities of the plain. The buried talent will shine none the worse for the long, long looming of its napery spun from dream and desire.

"Years ago—ten, fifteen, perhaps—I chanced on the queerest specimen of this order of the 'talented.' Much the same country, too. This"—he swept his glance out towards the now invisible sea—"this is a kind of dwarf replica of it. More naked, smoother, more sudden and precipitous, more 'forsaken,' moody. Alone! The trees are shorn there, as if with monstrous shears, by the winter gales. The air's salt. It is a country of stones and emerald meadows, of green, meandering, aimless lanes, of farms set in their clifts and valleys like rough time-bedimmed jewels, as if by some angel of humanity, wandering between dark and daybreak.

"I was younger then—in body: the youth of the mind is for men of an age—yours, maybe, and mine. Even then, even at that, I was sickened of crowds, of that unimaginable London—swarming wilderness of mankind in which a poor lost thirsty dog from Otherwhere tastes first the full meaning of that idle

word ' forsaken.' ' Forsaken by whom? ' is the question I ask myself now. Visitors to my particular paradise were few then —as if, my dear sir, we are not all of us visitors, visitants, revenants, on earth, panting for time in which to tell and share our secrets, roving in search of the marks that shall prove our quest not vain, not unprecedented, not a treachery. But let that be.

" I would start off morning after morning, bread and cheese in pocket, from the bare old house I lodged in, bound for that unforeseen nowhere for which the heart, the fantasy aches. Lingering hot noondays would find me stretched in a state half-comatose, yet vigilant, on the close-flowered turf of the fields or cliffs, on the sun-baked sands and rocks, soaking in the scene and life around me like some pilgrim chameleon. It was in hope to lose my way that I would set out. How shall a man find his way unless he lose it? Now and then I succeeded. That country is large, and its land and sea marks easily cheat the stranger. I was still of an age, you see, when my ' small door ' was ajar, and I planted a solid foot to keep it from shutting. But how could I know what I was after? One just shakes the tree of life, and the rare fruits come tumbling down, to rot for the most part in the lush grasses.

" What was most haunting and provocative in that far-away country was its fleeting resemblance to the country of dream. You stand, you sit, or lie prone on its bud-starred heights, and look down; the green, dispersed, treeless landscape spreads beneath you, with its hollows and mounded slopes, clustering farmstead, and scatter of village, all motionless under the vast wash of sun and blue, like the drop-scene of some enchanted playhouse centuries old. So, too, the visionary bird-haunted headlands, veiled faintly in a mist of unreality above their broken stones and the enormous saucer of the sea.

" You cannot guess there what you may not chance upon, or whom. Bells clash, boom, and quarrel hollowly on the edge of darkness in those breakers. Voices waver across the fainter winds. The birds cry in a tongue unknown yet not unfamiliar. The sky is the hawks' and the stars'. *There* one is on the edge of life, of the unforeseen, whereas our cities—are not our desiccated jaded minds ever continually pressing and edging further and further away from freedom, the vast unknown, the infinite presence, picking a fool's journey from sensual fact to fact at the tail of that he-ass called Reason? I suggest that in that solitude the spirit within us realises that it treads the

outskirts of a region long since called the Imagination. I assert we have strayed, and in our blindness abandoned——"

My stranger paused in his frenzy, glanced out at me from his obscure corner as if he had intended to stun, to astonish me with some violent heresy. We puffed out slowly, laboriously, from a "Halt" at which in the gathering dark and moonshine we had for some while been at a standstill. Never was wedding-guest more desperately at the mercy of ancient mariner.

"Well, one day," he went on, lifting his voice a little to master the resounding heart-beats of our steam-engine—"one late afternoon, in my goal-less wanderings, I had climbed to the summit of a steep grass-grown cart-track, winding up dustily between dense, untended hedges. Even then I might have missed the house to which it led, for, hair-pin fashion, the track here abruptly turned back on itself, and only a far fainter foot-path led on over the hill-crest. I might, I say, have missed the house and—and its inmates, if I had not heard the musical sound of what seemed like the twangling of a harp. This thin-drawn, sweet, tuneless warbling welled over the close green grass of the height as if out of space. Truth cannot say whether it was of that air or of my own fantasy. Nor did I ever discover what instrument, whether of man or Ariel, had released a strain so pure and yet so bodiless.

"I pushed on and found myself in command of a gorse-strewn height, a stretch of country that lay a few hundred paces across the steep and sudden valley in between. In a V-shaped entry to the left, and sunwards, lay an azure and lazy tongue of the sea. And as my eye slid softly thence and upwards and along the sharp, green horizon line against the glass-clear turquoise of space, it caught the flinty glitter of a square chimney. I pushed on, and presently found myself at the gate of a farmyard.

"There was but one straw-mow upon its staddles. A few fowls were sunning themselves in their dust-baths. White and pied doves preened and cooed on the roof of an outbuilding as golden with its lichens as if the western sun had scattered its dust for centuries upon the large slate slabs. Just that life and the whispering of the wind, nothing more. Yet even at one swift glimpse I seemed to have trespassed upon a peace that had endured for ages; to have crossed the viewless border that divides time from eternity. I leaned, resting, over the gate, and could have remained there for hours, lapsing ever more profoundly into the blessed quietude that had stolen over my thoughts.

" A bent-up woman appeared at the dark entry of a stone shed opposite to me, and, shading her eyes, paused in prolonged scrutiny of the stranger. At that I entered the gate and, explaining that I had lost my way and was tired and thirsty, asked for some milk. She made no reply, but after peering up at me, with something between suspicion and apprehension on her weather-beaten old face, led me towards the house which lay to the left on the slope of the valley, hidden from me till then by plumy bushes of tamarisk.

" It was a low grave house, grey-chimneyed, its stone walls traversed by a deep shadow cast by the declining sun, its dark windows rounded and uncurtained, its door wide open to the porch. She entered the house, and I paused upon the threshold. A deep unmoving quiet lay within, like that of water in a cave renewed by the tide. Above a table hung a wreath of wild flowers. To the right was a heavy oak settle upon the flags. A beam of sunlight pierced the air of the staircase from an upper window.

" Presently a dark long-faced gaunt man appeared from within, contemplating me, as he advanced, out of eyes that seemed not so much to fix the intruder as to encircle his image, as the sea contains the distant speck of a ship on its wide blue bosom of water. They might have been the eyes of the blind; the windows of a house in dream to which the inmate must make something of a pilgrimage to look out upon actuality. Then he smiled, and the long, dark features, melancholy yet serene, took light upon them, as might a bluff of rock beneath a thin passing wash of sunshine. With a gesture he welcomed me into the large dark-flagged kitchen, cool as a cellar, airy as a belfry, its sweet air traversed by a long oblong of light out of the west.

" The wide shelves of the painted dresser were laden with crockery. A wreath of freshly-gathered flowers hung over the chimney-piece. As we entered, a twittering cloud of small birds, robins, hedge-sparrows, chaffinches fluttered up a few inches from floor and sill and window-seat, and once more, with tiny starry-dark eyes observing me, soundlessly alighted.

" I could hear the infinitesimal *tic-tac* of their tiny claws upon the slate. My gaze drifted out of the window into the garden beyond, a cavern of clearer crystal and colour than that which astounded the eyes of young Aladdin. Apart from the twisted garland of wild flowers, the shining metal of range and copper candlestick, and the bright-scoured crockery, there was no adornment in the room except a rough frame, hanging from a

nail in the wall, and enclosing what appeared to be a faint patterned fragment of blue silk or fine linen. The chairs and table were old and heavy. A low light warbling, an occasional *skirr* of wing, a haze-like drone of bee and fly—these were the only sounds that edged a quiet intensified in its profundity by the remote stirrings of the sea.

"The house was stilled as by a charm, yet thought within me asked no questions; speculation was asleep in its kennel. I sat down to the milk and bread, the honey and fruit which the old woman laid out upon the table, and her master seated himself opposite to me, now in a low sibilant whisper—a tongue which they seemed to understand—addressing himself to the birds, and now, as if with an effort, raising those strange grey-green eyes of his to bestow a quiet remark upon me. He asked, rather in courtesy than with any active interest, a few questions, referring to the world, its business and transports—*our* beautiful world—as an astronomer in the small hours might murmur a few words to the chance-sent guest of his solitude concerning the secrets of Uranus or Saturn. There is another, an inexplorable side to the moon. Yet he said enough for me to gather that he, too, was of that small tribe of the aloof and wild to which our cracked old word 'forsaken' might be applied, hermits, clay-matted fakirs, and such-like, the snowy birds that play and cry amid mid-oceanic surges, the living of an oasis of the wilderness, which share a reality only distantly dreamed of by the time-driven thought-corroded congregations of man.

"Yet so narrow and hazardous I somehow realised was the brink of fellow-being (shall I call it?) which we shared, he and I, that again and again fantasy within me seemed to hover over that precipice Night knows as fear. It was he, it seemed, with that still embracive contemplation of his, with that far-away yet reassuring smile, that kept my poise, my balance. 'No,' some voice within him seemed to utter, 'you are safe; the bounds are fixed; though hallucination chaunt its decoy, you shall not irretrievably pass over. Eat and drink, and presently return to "life."' And I listened, and, like that of a drowsy child in its cradle, my consciousness sank deeper and deeper, stilled, pacified, into the dream amid which, as it seemed, this soundless house of stone now reared its walls.

"I had all but finished my meal when I heard footsteps approaching on the flags without. The murmur of other voices, distinguishably shrill yet guttural, even at a distance, and in spite of the dense stones and beams of the house which had

blunted their timbre, had already reached me. Now the feet halted. I turned my head—cautiously, even perhaps apprehensively—and confronted two figures in the doorway.

"I cannot now guess the age of my entertainer. These children—for children they were in face and gesture and effect, though as to form and stature apparently in their last teens—these children were far more problematical. I say 'form and stature,' yet obviously they were dwarfish. Their heads were sunken between their shoulders, their hair thick, their eyes disconcertingly deep-set. They were ungainly, their features peculiarly irregular, as if two races from the ends of the earth had in them intermingled their blood and strangeness; as if, rather, animal and angel had connived in their creation.

"But if some inward light lay on the still eyes, on the gaunt, sorrowful, quixotic countenance that now was fully and intensely bent on mine, emphatically that light was theirs also. He spoke to them; they answered—in English, my own language, without a doubt: but an English slurred, broken, and unintelligible to me, yet clear as bell, haunting, penetrating, pining as voice of nix or siren. My ears drank in the sound as an Arab parched with desert sand falls on his dried belly and gulps in mouthfuls of crystal water. The birds hopped nearer, as if beneath the rod of an enchanter. A sweet continuous clamour arose from their small throats. The exquisite colours of plume and bosom burned, greened, melted in the level sun-ray, in the darker air beyond.

"A kind of mournful gaiety, a lamentable felicity, such as rings in the cadences of an old folk-song, welled into my heart. I was come back to the borders of Eden, bowed and outwearied, gazing from out of dream into dream, homesick, 'forsaken.'

"Well, years have gone by," muttered my fellow-traveller deprecatingly, "but I have not forgotten that Eden's primeval trees and shade.

"They led me out, these bizarre companions, a he and a she, if I may put it as crudely as my apprehension of them put it to me then. Through a broad door they conducted me—if one who leads may be said to be conducted—into their garden. Garden! A full mile long, between undiscerned walls, it sloped and narrowed towards a sea at whose dark unfoamed blue, even at this distance, my eyes dazzled. Yet how can one call that a garden which reveals no ghost of a sign of human arrangement, of human slavery, of spade or hoe?

"Great boulders shouldered up, tessellated, embossed, pow-

dered with a thousand various mosses and lichens, between a flowering greenery of weeds. Wind-stunted, clear-emerald, lichen-tufted trees smoothed and crisped the inflowing airs of the ocean with their leaves and spines, sibilating a thin scarce-audible music. Scanty, rank, and uncultivated fruits hung close their vivid-coloured cheeks to the gnarled branches. It was the harbourage of birds, the small embowering parlour of their house of life, under an evening sky, pure and lustrous as a water-drop. It cried 'Hospital' to the wanderers of the universe.

"As I look back in ever-thinning nebulous remembrance on my two companions, hear their voices gutturally sweet and shrill, catch again their being, so to speak, I realise that there was a kind of Orientalism in their effect. Their instant courtesy was not Western, the smiles that greeted me, whenever I turned my head to look back at them, were infinitely friendly, yet infinitely remote. So ungainly, so far from our notions of beauty and symmetry were their bodies and faces, those heads thrust heavily between their shoulders, their disproportioned yet graceful arms and hands, that the children in some of our English villages might be moved to stone them, while their elders looked on and laughed.

"Dusk was drawing near; soon night would come. The colours of the sunset, sucking its extremest dye from every leaf and blade and petal, touched my consciousness even then with a vague fleeting alarm.

"I remember I asked these strange and happy beings, repeating my question twice or thrice, as we neared the surfy entry of the valley upon whose sands a tiny stream emptied its fresh waters—I asked them if it was they who had planted this multitude of flowers, many of a kind utterly unknown to me and alien to a country inexhaustibly rich. 'We wait; we wait!' I think they cried. And it was as if their cry woke echo from the green-walled valleys of the mind into which I had strayed. Shall I confess that tears came into my eyes as I gazed hungrily around me on the harvest of their patience?

"Never was actuality so close to dream. It was not only an unknown country, slipped in between these placid hills, on which I had chanced in my ramblings. I had entered for a few brief moments a strange region of consciousness. I was treading, thus accompanied, amid a world of welcoming and fearless life—oh, friendly to me!—the paths of man's imagination, the kingdom from which thought and curiosity, vexed scrutiny and lust—a lust it may be for nothing more impious than the actual

—had prehistorically proved the insensate means of his banishment. 'Reality,' 'Consciousness': had he for 'the time being' unwittingly, unhappily missed his way? Would he be led back at length to that garden wherein cockatrice and basilisk bask, harmlessly, at peace?

"I speculate now. In that queer, yes, and possibly sinister, company, sinister only because it was alien to me, I did not speculate. In their garden, the familiar was become the strange —'the strange' that lurks in the inmost heart, unburdens its riches in trance, flings its light and gilding upon love, gives heavenly savour to the intemperate bowl of passion, and is the secret of our incommunicable pity. What is yet queerer, these beings were evidently glad of my company. They stumped after me (as might yellow men after some Occidental quadruped never before seen) in merry collusion of nods and wreathed smiles at this perhaps unprecedented intrusion.

"I stood for a moment looking out over the placid surface of the sea. A ship in sail hung phantom-like on the horizon. I pined to call my discovery to its seamen. The tide gushed, broke, spent itself on the bare boulders, I was suddenly cold and alone, and gladly turned back into the garden, my companions instinctively separating to let me pass between them. I breathed in the rare, almost exotic heat, the tenuous, honeyed, almond-laden air of its flowers and birds—gull, sheldrake, plover, wagtail, finch, robin, which as I half-angrily, half-sadly realised fluttered up in momentary dismay only at *my* presence—the embodied spectre of their enemy, man. Man? Then who were these? . . .

"I lost again a way lost early that morning, as I trudged inland at night. The dark came, warm and starry. I was tired, dejected, exhausted beyond words. That night I slept in a barn and was awakened soon after daybreak by the crowing of cocks. I went out, dazed and blinking into the sunlight, bathed face and hands in a brook near by, and came to a village before a soul was stirring. So I sat under a thrift-cushioned, thorn-crowned wall in a meadow, and once more drowsed off and fell asleep. When again I awoke, it was ten o'clock. The church clock in its tower knelled out the strokes, and I went into an inn for food.

"A corpulent, blonde woman, kindly and hospitable, with a face comfortably resembling her own sow's, that yuffed and nosed in at the open door as I sat on my stool, served me with

what I called for. I described—not without some vanishing shame, as if it were a treachery—my farm, its whereabouts.

"Her small blue eyes 'pigged' at me with a fleeting expression which I failed to translate. The name of the farm, it appeared, was Trevarras. 'And did you see any of the Creatures?' she asked me in a voice not entirely her own. 'The Creatures'! I sat back for an instant and stared at her; then realised that Creature was the name of my host, and Maria and Christus (though here her dialect may have deceived me) the names of my two gardeners. She spun an absurd story, so far as I could tack it together and make it coherent. Superstitious stuff about this man who had wandered in upon the shocked and curious inhabitants of the district and made his home at Trevarras—a stranger and pilgrim, a 'foreigner,' it seemed, of few words, dubious manners, and both uninformative.

"Then there was something (she placed her two fat hands, one of them wedding-ringed, on the zinc of the bar-counter, and peered over at me, as if I were a delectable 'wash'), then there was something about a woman 'from the sea.' In a 'blue gown,' and either dumb, inarticulate, or mistress of only a foreign tongue. She must have lived in sin, moreover, those pig's eyes seemed to yearn, since the children were 'simple,' 'naturals'—as God intends in such matters. It was useless. One's stomach may sometimes reject the cold sanative aerated water of 'the next morning,' and my ridiculous intoxication had left me dry but not yet quite sober.

"Anyhow, this she told me, that my blue woman, as fair as flax, had died and was buried in the neighbouring churchyard (the nearest to, though miles distant from, Trevarras). She repeatedly assured me, as if I might otherwise doubt so sophisticated a fact, that I should find her grave there, her 'stone.'

"So indeed I did—far away from the elect, and in a shade-ridden north-west corner of the sleepy, cropless acre: a slab, scarcely rounded, of granite, with but a name bitten out of the dark rough surface, '*Femina Creature.*'"

BACHELORS

HUGH WALPOLE

I

In any cathedral town there must of necessity be certain characters who are bound and tied to the cobble-stones of the place from whose heart they have sprung. One can picture them in no other town or country—they are that place's property as surely as are the Town Hall, the Baths, the Market Place, and the Cathedral. Their very peculiarities, their little idiosyncrasies, are proudly suggested in that column of the local newspaper headed, "Are You Aware That——?" and, always, their names are to be found after "Amongst those present were——" when any kind of festivity, civic or personal, has occurred.

The cathedral town of S—— in Glebeshire boasted Henry and Robert Chandler, Esqs., amongst their most distinguished "features." "Features" they were, and no visitor could spend a week in that pleasant city without having them pointed out to him, just as he had already been directed towards the great west-end window of the cathedral or the magnificent golden tomb of the Dryden St. Pomfrets.

Harry and Robin Chandler had spent all their days enclosed by the pleasant shelter of S——. They had indeed gone first to Rugby and afterwards to Trinity, Cambridge, but from these places they had always returned to S—— with such precipitation and eagerness that it was evident that even whilst their bodies were being harassed and driven in wilder places their souls were resting in S——.

Robin Chandler was, at the time of this crisis in his history, fifty-five years of age, Harry ten years younger, and they lived at the corner of the Close in a house shaped like a teapot, and had a motherly and rotund widow as their housekeeper. Of the two, Robin was most certainly the "character." He *looked* a "character." He was precisely the kind of old gentleman whom you would expect to find in the close of an English cathedral. You would say, on seeing Robin Chandler, "Ah! *there* he is!" and you would connect him with the other old

gentlemen and the other old maids whom you had, in your time, met in cathedral cities. Robin looked more than his age because his hair was white and his figure rotund. His face was round and amiable and a little foolish, and this foolishness was to be attributed to the fact that he was never sure what he would do with his mouth. He would be amused and would laugh heartily, but even in the climax of the laugh his mouth would wander a little and tremble uncertainly at the corners. He had a dimple in each cheek, and a fine high forehead from which his hair was brushed straight back into a kind of white waterfall that tumbled down the back of his head. He was short and fat and very neat, being dressed generally in pepper-and-salt trousers, a brown velvet waistcoat with brass buttons, a black coat and a black tie. When out of doors he wore a soft black hat cocked jauntily over one ear, and he always trotted along, moving his feet very slightly one in front of the other. He stopped a thousand times during his walk down the High Street, greeting his friends (he had no enemies in the world), and he always had a number of gentle queer things to say—things that no one else would have thought of saying. His interests were natural history, stamps, bowls, and, of course, his brother—and this last swallowed up the others even as the serpent in the Bible swallowed up all the other serpents.

Harry Chandler was of quite another kind: of middle height, red-faced, short brown moustache, brown hair cut close to his head, his eyes confident and unintelligent, his attitude that of a man who knows his world, takes many baths, and has no doubts about anything. He stood at the head of the sporting interests of S——, being president of the golf club and the cricket club; his interests were also apparently political, for he was a most important member of the Conservative Club that had its palatial apartments half-way down the High Street. He might be seen any morning of the week striding along in a tweed jacket and large and balloon-like knickerbockers, his face very red, his eyes very wide and staring, his air that of a man who knows his power and values it. "Ha, Benson!" he would say, or, "Ha, Rawlings!" or even, "Good-day to you, Bumpus!" and sometimes, when a local infant threatened his progress, "Out of the way, little one, out of the way!"

People said, with considerable truth, that it was strange that two brothers, who were so continually together, should be so different, but when one knew Robin Chandler intimately one discovered that he had been endeavouring, all his days, to

acquire some of his brother's habits and characteristics. He would try at times to be domineering, hearty, and monosyllabic, and of course he always failed. He had the pleasantest of voices, but it was the voice of an amiable canary, and he never could express himself without using a great number of words. That Robin worshipped his brother was one of the items of natural history treasured by the city of S——.

He had worshipped from that day, so many years ago, when a lonely little boy of ten, he had been informed that he was henceforth to have a companion in life.

He had been, always, from the first a submissive character who depended very much on other people's affection for happiness. It had been, the ladies of S—— always said, a shamefully one-sided affair.

Harry Chandler's attitude to his brother was one of indulgent tolerance. "Dear old fellow," he would call him. "He's an odd kind of chap, my brother," he would confide to a listening friend. "You'd never think we were brothers, now, would you? You should just see him try to play golf. Stands there with his legs apart, his body stiff as a rod, biting his lips, don't you know—serious as anything—and then he clean misses it, you know. He's a dear old fellow, but, between you and me, a bit of an old woman."

Robin was quite aware of his brother's attitude, but, indeed, no other seemed possible. He had watched, with wide-eyed wonder, his brother's growth. The things Harry could do! Was there anyone who played games with such confidence, anyone who could hold his own in a gathering of men with such assurance and success, anyone so fascinating in a drawing-room, anyone in the world with such captivating *savoir-faire*? Robin, himself, was afraid of women, except very old and lonely ones. He had, long ago, been "horribly" in love, and she might, one imagines, have loved him in return had he pursued the matter; but—what *would* Harry do without him? No, until Harry himself married, Robin must send the other sex to limbo. And through all these years what agitations there had been! For a long time it had seemed as certain that Harry would marry as that night must follow the day. That his brother was fascinating to women Robin held as surely as that he himself had no attraction for them whatever! Terrible hours! Terrible apparitions of beautiful young women to whom Harry would give their first golfing lesson! Terrible "alarums and excursions"! "Oh! I hear, Mr. Chandler, that we are to

congratulate your brother . . . !" Is not S—— a cathedral city?

And yet, always, Robin was delivered. Through all these years Harry had not been even engaged. Robin wondered at the women, but, from his heart, was grateful to them, and, with every year, the assurance of safety grew. Now, always, he put the terrible thought from him. Sometimes in the night it would leap out from the dark, with mouth a-grin and widespread claws. "What'll you do, my friend, if it *does* happen? It may, you know. Plenty of time yet. . . . A nice kind of time you'll have alone——" Well, that was a bad half-hour, but at the end of it the grinning beast was beaten back to its lair.

There was nothing that Harry could do that did not interest Robin, and this, men at the club said, was bad for Harry.

"Really, Chandler's getting a bit of a bore. Thinks the least little thing he's done ought to be sent up to the *Times*. All that silly old brother of his."

But they liked "the silly old brother"—liked him, were the truth known, better than Harry. Robin would have been immensely surprised at his popularity had he ever known it.

There came an afternoon. It was half-past four on a day of late October, and the cathedral bells were drowsily ringing for evensong. Robin was standing at the window of the little smoking-room, where they always had tea, waiting his brother's return from golf. It was dusk, and at the farther end of the Close, above an ivy-covered wall, low between two old Georgian houses, the blue evening sky, fading into palest saffron, showed. The cobbles had caught the evening light, and figures—two old ladies, a canon, an old gentleman in a bath-chair—were moving, like notes in a piece of music, across the grass square to the cathedral doors. It was a sight that Robin had seen year after year from that same window, and it had always for him drama as intense as anything that Napoleon or Wellington can have felt from the top of some smoke-clad hill. "There's Miss Barton. I thought she was in London. I wonder whether her brother's left her anything in his will. There's Prendergast. It's his month, I suppose. How cross it will make him, having to come in from his golf!"

He was conscious, as he heard the bells, of the quiet, cosy little room behind him filled with dusty old things that belonged to every period of his experiences—old college photographs, old books, old caps that his brother had worn in different teams which his presence had honoured. There, too, the kettle was

humming, the tea-cake was hot, the clock—the same old gold clock—ticked the minutes away. He ruffled his hair with his hand, until he looked more than ever like an amiable, well-fed bird. The bells had fallen to a slow monotone—"Hurry up—hurry up—hurry up." . . . There were steps on the cobbles, a key in the door, a pause in the hall, then his brother had come in.

"Fancy, Harry," said Robin, moving towards the tea-things, "Miss Brandon's back. I wonder whether—— "

"I say, old man "—Harry's voice was, for perhaps the first time in his life, nervous and hesitating—"Robin, old boy—hem! You must congratulate me—hem—yes—ha!—I'm engaged to Miss Pinsent. She—hum—accepted me on the—hum—golf-course this afternoon."

II

There followed then for Robin Chandler the most terrible weeks, weeks far more terrible than anything that he had ever imagined possible for human courage to support.

It was demanded of him, on every side, that he should be false. He must be false to his brother; he must pretend to him that he was glad and happy that this had occurred; he must be false to all the old women of S——, who crowded about him, eagerly watching for any sign of that wound which, they were assured amongst themselves, his brother's engagement must have dealt him; above all, he must be false to the girl, Iris Pinsent, who instantly demanded his affection and (such was always her attitude to the other sex) protection from the roughness of the world.

Iris Pinsent—golden, fragile, and appealing—was straight from the schoolroom. Her father had, six months before, arrived at S—— as governor of its prison, and, during those six months, Iris had put up her hair and "come out." She had seemed to Robin so entirely of the schoolroom that he had never, for the wildest instant, considered her as a possible wife for anybody. Now every day she appeared, ran over their old teapot house as though it were her own, won the instant and undying hatred of Mrs. Rumbold, the housekeeper, sat upon Harry's knee, pulled Harry's hair, untied his tie and tied it up again, laughed and sang and danced about the two elderly men as though they were puppies quite new to a brilliant world.

No one—not Robin himself—had any conception of the depths of Robin's suffering. "Mr. Robert Chandler *must* be feeling his brother's engagement," said one old lady to another old lady, and *another* old lady to *another* old lady. "But really you wouldn't think so, to look at him. He'll feel it after the marriage though, when he's all alone"—and the old ladies either licked their lips or wiped their eyes, according to their characters.

To Robin it was exactly as though he were standing on the very edge of a slimy and bottomless pit. Towards this pit his feet were slipping, and soon, very soon, the inevitable moment of descent would come; but meanwhile, gripping with his feet, digging his hands into the slime, he would hold on as long as he could . . . the world should not know until it must.

He trotted about the town, went to tea parties, played bowls, was as neat and as careful, as interested in his neighbours' affairs, as kind and thoughtful as ever he had been. Harry Chandler, who was, of course, not a discerning man, was hurt at this indifference.

"Really, Robin," he said one evening, when they were alone, "I don't believe you'll mind it a bit when I'm gone."

Robin paused, then said—"Of course, Harry, I shall miss you—terribly," and that was all.

Robin, in fact, ran from his despair. There were horrible moments when it caught him up, and then there was a grinding cold at his heart; but these moments with all the force of his character he beat down. But what was he to do? What should he, could he, do? He had devoted his life, every moment and thought of it, to his brother's interests. He could not now, at his age, build up other gods, worship at other shrines. His bowls, his stamps, he laughed aloud when he thought of them. His life had been simply that he should watch his brother's triumphs, soften his brother's defeats, listen to his brother's ideas, anticipate his brother's wants. This may seem to many a humiliating rôle for a man: Robin Chandler did not feel it so; he was simply grateful that he had so splendid a person as his brother to play shadow to. He fancied that many people in the town thought him a lucky fellow.

No longer, even now, was there any need of him as audience, no longer was his opinion invited, no longer his praise demanded—and yet, even in these early weeks of the engagement, Robin fancied that Miss Pinsent was not proving quite so good a listener as she might. Indeed he began to wonder whether Miss

Pinsent liked being a listener at all. She had so much to say, so many of her own achievements and triumphs to recount. Robin, as he watched the two of them together, wondered at first how any one *could* treat his brother with such casual equality; then, as the days passed and this became a common sight, he wondered whether there had not been something a little absurd about his own attitude.

Very reluctantly and only after a very considerable time Robin was compelled to confess to himself that Harry was not quite at his best as a lover. Harry, whilst Miss Pinsent sprang around him, laughed at him, mocked him, imitated him, burlesqued him, was often at a loss. He had found at once that his heavy, authoritative manner had no effect upon Miss Pinsent.

"Ha!—hum——" she would imitate him. "How d'y do, Rawlings."

Robin, listening in amazement, wondered whether there could be any love in Miss Pinsent's heart, but apparently love there really was, of a kittenish, puppyish kind. Another astonishing thing was that Miss Pinsent was, it seemed, more afraid of Robin than of Harry. She was only, on the rarest occasions, "kittenish" with Robin, but would stand in front of him and ask him quite serious questions about Life and bowls and bird's eggs, and Robin would ruffle his hair and answer her to the best of his ability. Really, Robin was forced to confess to himself, poor Harry looked quite foolish and even silly on many occasions. "Why does he let her behave like that?" he thought. "I do hope that other people don't notice it."

He was pleasantly aware—if anything could be pleasant at this terrible time—that he was acquiring now an independent existence in people's eyes. This had begun, of course, with people being sorry for him, but that the proud little man would not allow for a moment. He had been, for many, many years, overshadowed by his brother; but now that his brother was allotted and disposed of, Robin Chandler stood out all by himself. "Poor little Mr. Chandler!" the ladies said. "We must show him a little kindness just now." And Robin was obliged to confess that he liked it. Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that, during all this time, he was not an utterly miserable man.

Then, as the weeks passed, his discomfort grew. He wished, how fervently, that his brother would deal with the girl in some more dignified and satisfactory fashion. "Why, even I,"

Robin thought to himself, "have more influence over her than he has. She never plays about with me like that. Really, Harry——"

But the tragic side of it all was that Harry was not a happy lover. Why was he a lover at all, if not a happy one? All Harry's fine spirit had departed. His honest brow wore a puzzled look that never in all its five-and-forty years it had worn before. He began sentences, "I wonder whether——" "Do you think, Robin——" and then never finished them. He abandoned the Conservative Club, and although he played golf with Miss Pinsent on most afternoons of the week, that beloved game seemed to have lost most of its charm.

He no longer on his return would proclaim to his brother that he had done a bogey five in three, or beaten old Major Waggett (his special foe) by two up and three to play. No, he returned and drank his tea in silence. Robin's heart ached for him.

Once the two of them had, in Robin's presence, a most horrible quarrel. They were all having tea together in the little dusty smoking-room, and Miss Pinsent, striking unexpectedly her lover in the chest (one of her loving, playful tricks), upset his tea. He swore then with a frank volubility that spoke of many weeks' difficult restraint. She cried, rushed from the room and the house, vowing that she would never return. . . .

But, of course, she did return, and that very shortly afterwards. There was a reconciliation—but Robin found, to his own exceeding surprise, that he was rather ashamed of both of them. "I wish—I wish," he thought, "that I didn't see Harry like this. Love affects people very strangely."

Then, on an afternoon of pouring rain, Robin Chandler was beating his way up the High Street, hastening home to warmth and tea. He was sheltered by an enormous umbrella, and this gave him precisely the appearance of a walking mushroom. His arm was touched, and, turning round, he saw Miss Pinsent, who was looking bedraggled and unhappy, without any umbrella at all.

"I didn't know it was going to rain. It looked so fine . . ." Her voice trembled and she betrayed the imminence of tears—she took his arm and they walked along together. Then, suddenly, he was aware that she was talking about Harry, and speaking as though she needed Robin's advice about him. Robin's heart began to beat fast. "Did he really think that Harry loved her? . . . Would Harry really be kind to her? . . . Of course she was very fond of him, but . . . Did he think

that differences in ages *really* made much trouble afterwards? . . . Of course she was very fond . . ."

This may be definitely put down as the most critical moment in all Mr. Robin Chandler's long life. The Tempter, with that bewildering precipitance and complete disregard for the justice of a forewarning prelude that he invariably betrays, sprang, there and then, in the dripping High Street of S——, upon the poor little man.

Robin saw, with a horrible distinctness, that the power was given him to sway Miss Pinsent. A little hesitation on his part, an unexpressed but nevertheless definite agreement with her as to the danger of unequal ages in marriage, a hint or two as to possible harshnesses and brutalities in Harry's character—he saw with amazing and horrible clearness that these things would be quite enough. By to-morrow afternoon Mr. Henry Chandler would no longer be engaged to Miss Iris Pinsent. . . .

They halted for an instant at the top of the High Street. The wind was rushing round the corner and the rain lashed the umbrella. Robin could see the wall of the cathedral, very grey and grim, and one corner of the Close with the rain running in little driven lines across the cobbles.

"You'll have your brother back again. . . . You won't be a lonely, lonely old man. . . ."

Then with a shake of his shoulders the thing was gone and, as they drove their way into the Close, he began eagerly, exhaustively, almost breathlessly, to prove to her that his brother was indeed a god among men.

III

It was arranged that Harry should go and stay with the Pinsents for a week in a house that they had in the country some miles from S——, and that during that time the date of the wedding should be settled. Robin saw with confused feelings his brother's departure; it was the first time for many years that they had been separated—this was melancholy enough—but also he was compelled to admit that it was a relief to him that, for a week at any rate, he would not be forced to watch his brother under such conditions. He found, indeed, that in a resigned, rather dejected kind of fashion, he was quite happy. Mrs. Rumbold, the housekeeper, could not make enough fuss of him. Harry had always been so emphatically the master

in the house that she had never considered Mr. Robert. It had always been Harry who had arranged the hours of meals, and did he in the summer come in very late, well, then, Mr. Robert waited.

But now——! No, Mr. Harry had acted as a selfish and inconsiderate man, leaving poor Mr. Robert all alone " without a thought." What did an old thing of his age want to do with marriage—choosing so young a girl, too—almost indecent! Had Miss Pinsent treated Mrs. Rumbold with care and deference, then there might have been another opinion altogether. As it was—" She's a regular young Slap-in-the-face, if you ask me," said Mrs. Rumbold to her chosen friends. " Slap and come again, that's what *she* is. You mark my words."

Therefore Robin received an attention, a deference, that had never been his before. And not only from Mrs. Rumbold! The whole town offered it him. The town had always been fond of him, but so modest, and retiring had he been that the comment always was—" Mr. Robert Chandler? . . . Oh yes! . . . Such a nice little man. No one sees very much of him. No one *knows* him, you might say, but you couldn't help liking him! "

But, during this week, in what an amazing way did he expand, flourish, blossom! It was at first incredible to him that people should be interested in him for himself, and fifty-five years' convictions about life are difficult things to shake. But behold! Whereas before it had been, " Oh, Mr. Chandler, your brother has so kindly promised to dine with us on Thursday night, I wonder whether you could come too? " Now it was, " Do come and dine, Mr. Chandler, *any* night as long as you give us a day or two's notice." People found him indeed a great deal more amusing by himself than he had been before in his brother's company. Always there had been that anxious glance in his brother's direction to see whether everything were well, always that modest hesitation about giving any opinion at all whilst his brother was present. Now he would sit perched on the edge of a sofa, his hands on his fat little knees, the dimples dancing in his cheeks, his hair on end, his chuckle (a chuckle entirely his own) over some joke that he saw ahead of him and would very shortly deliver to his audience. By the end of the week he had decided that:

(1) He liked women after all.

(2) He would be perfectly wretched alone, but that he would bear up as well as he could.

(3) He'd really no idea that he'd got so much to say.
(4) He felt younger than he had ever done before.

"Still," he said to himself, "dear old Harry's marriage will be too dreadful. I simply don't know what I shall do with myself."

The afternoon of Harry's return arrived. Robin stood at the window as he had done on that other horrible day when he had first heard of the engagement.

He was inevitably reminded of that day, for now again there, above the low wall, pale blue was fading into saffron, across the grass figures were stealing; already the bell was dropping into its "Hurry up—hurry up—hurry up."

Robin watched, and then suddenly, like a flame, like a fire, came the truth. He knew, yes, he knew, let him deny it as he might, that never in all his five-and-fifty years had he enjoyed a week as he had enjoyed this last one. He had tasted delights, known extravagances and excitements that had never before been his. He had been free!

He stared round bewildered. What treachery to Harry! What irony that so soon he should have changed from despair to what was not far from triumph! He remembered the bitter dismay that so short a time ago had, in this very room, wrapped him round.

But now he was a man of freedom! No one's shadow, depending upon no one in the world for his independent happiness! His eyes fell upon a picture above the fireplace, a water-colour painting of a grey fell and a blue lake at evening. It was a picture that he loved, but Harry had declared it "A dreary thing"—and it was only this week that it had been raised to that place of honour. After all, Harry would not care now, now when so soon he was to have a house of his own.

The door was flung open, and Harry was there, there with him in the room.

"I say!" he closed the door behind him and came forward. "Robin, she's chucked me!"

"Oh!"

"Yes—jolly well chucked me—last night when we were alone she told me. Been mistaken . . . misjudged her feelings—was too young . . . all the rest of it."

"Oh! Harry. . . . Oh, I'm sorry!"

Harry strode twice or thrice up and down the room. "Yes, chucked, by Jove! At first, you know, you could have knocked me down with a feather. But now—damn it—I don't know,

Robin, that I'm not glad. She said it was largely some talk she'd had with you about me—how you'd praised me no end, and then she'd seen that she didn't feel about me quite like that, and that she couldn't marry me unless she did. The contrast struck her, don't you know. . . ."

He paused, then went on: "But I'm glad, dashed if I'm not. It's awful being engaged. . . . I felt it all the time, really. She never said things about me as you've always done—never knew me a bit as you do. It's a relief to be free—it *is* really. I missed you like anything. You were always so sympathetic and understanding. It'll be jolly to have you to tell things to again. . . . Yes—dash it—hum—ha—— Won't the fellows at the club laugh? . . . Well, I must go and clean. Tell old Ma Rumbold to hurry with the tea."

He went out.

Robin waited a little, then, with the very shadow of a sigh, walked to the window. He looked out for a moment at the gathering dusk, then got a chair, climbed on to it and carefully took down the water-colour from the wall.

THE PRINCE CONSORT

ANTHONY HOPE

I HAD known her for some considerable time before I came to know him. Most of their acquaintance were in the same case; for to know him was among the less noticeable and the less immediate results of knowing her. You might go to the house three or four times and not happen upon him. He was there always, but he did not attract attention. You joined Mrs. Clinton's circle, or, if she were in a confidential mood, you sat with her on the sofa. She would point out her daughter, and Muriel, attired in a wonderful elaboration of some old-fashioned mode, would talk to you about "Mamma's books," while Mrs. Clinton declared that, do what she would, she could not prevent the darling from reading them. Perhaps, when you had paid half-a-dozen visits, Mr. Clinton would cross your path. He was very polite, active for your comfort, ready to carry out his wife's

directions, determined to be useful. Mrs. Clinton recognised his virtues. She called him an "old dear," with a fond pitying smile on her lips, and would tell you, with an arch glance and the slightest of shrugs, that "he wrote too." If you asked what he wrote, she said that it was "something musty," but that it kept him happy, and that he never minded being interrupted, or even having nowhere to write, because Muriel's dancing lesson occupied the dining-room, "and I really couldn't have him in my study. One must be *alone* to work, mustn't one?" She could not be blamed for holding her work above his, there was nothing at all to show for his; whereas hers not only brought her a measure of fame, as fame is counted, but also doubled the moderate private income on which they had started housekeeping—and writing—thirteen or fourteen years before. Mr. Clinton himself would have been the last to demur to her assumption; he accepted his inferiority with an acquiescence that was almost eagerness. He threw himself into the task of helping his wife, not of course in the writing, but by relieving her of family and social cares. He walked with Muriel, and was sent to parties when his wife was too busy to come. I recollect that he told me, when we had become friendly, that these offices made considerable inroads on his time. "If," he said apologetically, "I had not acquired the habit of sitting up late, I should have difficulty in getting forward with my work. As it happens, Millie doesn't work at night—the brain must be fresh for *her* work—and so I can have the study then; and I am not so liable to—I mean, I have not so many other calls then."

I liked Clinton, and I do not mean by that that I disliked Mrs. Clinton. Indeed I admired her very much, and her husband's position in the household seemed just as natural to me as it did to himself and to everybody else. Young Gregory Dulcet, who is a poet and a handsome impudent young dog, was felt by us all to have put the matter in a shape that was at once true in regard to our host, and pretty in regard to our hostess, when he referred, apparently in a casual way, to Mr. Clinton as "the Prince Consort." Mrs. Clinton laughed and blushed; Muriel clapped her hands and ran off to tell her father. She came back saying that he was very pleased with the name, and I believe that very possibly he really was. Anyhow, young Dulcet was immensely pleased with it; he repeated it, and it "caught on." I heard Mrs. Clinton herself, with a half-daring, half-modest air, use it more than once. Thus Mrs. Clinton was

led to believe herself great; so that she once asked me if I thought that there was any prospect of *The Quarterly* " doing her." I said that I did not see why not. Yet it was not a probable literary event.

Thus Mr. Clinton passed the days of an obscure useful life, helping his wife, using the dining-room when dancing lessons did not interfere, and enjoying the luxury of the study in the small hours of the morning. And Mrs. Clinton grew more and more pitiful to him; and Muriel more and more patronising; and the world more and more forgetful. And then, one fine morning, as I was going to my office, the Prince Consort overtook me. He was walking fast, and he carried a large, untidy, brown-paper parcel. I quickened my pace to keep up with his.

" Sorry to hurry you, old fellow," said he, " but I must be back in an hour. A fellow's coming to interview Millie, and I promised to be back and show him over the house. She doesn't want to lose more of her time than is absolutely necessary: she's in the thick of a new story, you see. And Muriel's got her fiddle lesson, so she can't do it."

" And what's brought you out with the family wash? " I asked in pleasantry, pointing to the parcel.

The Prince Consort blushed (though he must have been forty at least at this date), pulled his beard, and said:

" This? Do you mean this? Oh, this is—well, it's a little thing of my own."

" Of your own? What do you mean? " I asked.

" Didn't Millie ever tell you that I write too? Well, I do when I can get a few hours. And this is it. I've managed to get a fellow to look at it. Millie spoke a word for me, you know."

I do not know whether my expression was sceptical or offensive, but I suppose it must have been one or the other, for the Prince Consort went on hastily:

" Oh, I'm not going to be such an ass as to pay anything for having it brought out, you know. They must do it on spec. or leave it alone. Besides, they really like to oblige Millie, you see."

" It doesn't look very little," I observed.

" Er—no. I'm afraid it's rather long," he admitted.

" What's it about? "

" Oh, it's dull, heavy stuff. I can't do what Millie does, you see. It's not a novel."

We parted at the door of the publisher who had been ready to oblige Mrs. Clinton, and would, I thought, soon regret his

complaisance; and I went on to my office, dismissing the Prince Consort and his " little thing " from my mind.

I went to the Clintons' about three months later, in order to bid them farewell before starting for a holiday on the Continent. They were, for a wonder, without other visitors, and when we had talked over Mrs. Clinton's last production, she stretched out her hand and pointed to the table.

" And there," she said, with a little laugh, " is Thompson's " (the Prince Consort's Christian name is Thompson) " *magnum opus*. Vincents' have just sent him his advance copies."

The Prince Consort laughed nervously as I rose and walked to the table.

" Never mind, papa," I heard Muriel say encouragingly. " You know Mr. George Vincent says it's very good."

" Oh, he thought that would please your mother," protested the Prince Consort.

I examined the two large thick volumes that lay on the table. I glanced at the title page: and I felt sorry for the poor Prince Consort. It must have been a terrible " grind " to write such a book—almost as bad as reading it. But I said something civil about the importance and interest of the subject.

" If you really don't mind looking at it," said the Prince Consort, " I should like awfully to send you a copy."

" Oh yes! You must read it," said Mrs. Clinton. " Why, *I'm* going to read—well, some of it! I've promised! "

" So am I," said little Muriel, while the Prince Consort rubbed his hands together with a sort of pride which was, on its other side, the profoundest humility. He was wondering, I think, that he should have been able to produce any book at all—even the worst of books—and admiring a talent which he had not considered himself to possess.

" I'm going to worry everybody who comes here to buy it—or to order it at Mudie's, anyhow," pursued Mrs. Ciinton. " What's written in this house must be read."

" I hope Vincents' won't lose a lot over it," said the Prince Consort, shaking his head.

" Oh well, they've made a good deal out of me before now," laughed his wife lightly.

I did not take the Prince Consort's book away with me to the Continent. Whatever else it might be, it was certainly not holiday reading, and it would have needed a portmanteau to itself. But the reverberation of the extraordinary and almost unequalled " boom " which the book made reached me in the

recesses of Switzerland. I came on *The Times* of three days before in my hotel, and it had three columns and a half on Mr. Thompson Clinton's work. The weekly *Budget* which my sister sent to me at Andermatt contained, besides a long review, a portrait of the Prince Consort (he must have sat to them on purpose) and a biographical sketch of him, quite accurate as to the remarkably few incidents which his previous life contained. It was this sketch which first caused me to begin to realise what was happening. For the sketch, after a series of eulogies (which to my prepossessed mind seemed absurdly extravagant) on the Prince Consort, reached its conclusion with the following remark: "Mr. Thompson Clinton's wife is also a writer, and is known in the literary world as the author of more than one clever and amusing novel." I laid down the *Budget* with a vague feeling that a revolution had occurred. It was now Mrs. Clinton who "wrote too."

I was right in my feeling, yet my feeling was inadequate to the reality with which I was faced on my return to England. The Prince Consort was the hero of the hour. I had written him a line of warm congratulation, and I settled at once to the book, not only in order to be able to talk about it, but also because I could not, without personal investigation, believe that he had done all they said. But he had. It was a wonderful book—full of learning and research, acute and profound in argument, and (greatest of all surprises) eminently lucid, polished, and even brilliant in style; irony, pathos, wit—the Prince Consort had them all. I laid the second volume down, wondering no longer that he had become an authority, that his name appeared in the lists of public banquets, that he was quoted now by one, now by the other, political party, and that translations into French and German were to be undertaken by distinguished *savants*.

And of course both *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh* had articles—"did him," as his wife had phrased it. Upon which, being invited by Mrs. Clinton to an evening party, I made a point of going.

There were a great many people there that night. A large group was on the hearthrug. I am tall, and looking over the heads of the assembly, I saw the Prince Consort standing there. He was smiling, still rather nervously, and was talking in quick, eager tones. Everyone listened in deferential silence, broken by murmurs of "Yes, yes," or "How true!" or "I never thought of that!" and Muriel held the Prince Consort's hand,

and looked up at him with adoration in her young eyes. I rejoiced with the Prince Consort in his hour of deserved triumph, but I did not, somehow, find Muriel as "pretty a picture" as a lady told me later on that she was. Indeed, I thought that the child would have been as well—or better—in bed. I turned round and looked for Mrs. Clinton. Ah, there she was, on her usual sofa. By her side sat Lady Troughton; nobody else was near. Mrs. Clinton was talking very quickly and vivaciously to her companion, who rose as I approached, gave me her hand, and then passed on to join the group on the hearthrug. I sat down by Mrs. Clinton, and began to congratulate her on her husband's marvellous triumph.

"Yes," said she, "do you see he's in both the quarterlies?"

I said that such a tribute was only natural.

"And it's selling wonderfully too," she went on. "You may imagine how much obliged Vincents' are to me for sending him there!"

"Did you know he was doing it?" I asked.

"Oh, I knew he was working at something. Muriel used to be always chaffing him about it."

"She doesn't chaff him now, I should think."

"No," said Mrs. Clinton, twisting a ring on her finger round and round. Suddenly the group opened, and the Prince Consort came through, leading Muriel by the hand. He marched across the room, followed by his admirers. I rose, and he stood close by his wife, and began to talk about her last novel. He said that it was wonderfully clever, and told us all to get it and read it. Everybody murmured that such was their intention, and a lady observed:

"How charming for you to be able to provide your husband with recreation, Mrs. Clinton!"

"Papa doesn't care about novels much, really," said Muriel.

"You do, I suppose, young lady?" asked someone.

"I like papa's book better," the child answered, and we all laughed, Mrs. Clinton leading the chorus with almost exaggerated heartiness.

And then an enthusiastic woman must needs see where Mr. Thompson Clinton (the Prince Consort bid fair to be double-barrelled before long) worked. She would take no denial, and at last Mrs. Clinton rose, and, in spite of her husband's protests, led the way to the study. I had been in the room a little while before I went abroad. It was much changed now. A row of Mrs. Clinton's novels, indeed, still stood on the top of the whatnot, but her

"litter" (it had been her own playful name for her manuscripts and other properties) had vanished. Large, fat, solemn books, Blue-books, books of science, of statistics, and other horrors dominated the scene.

"And to think that the great book was actually written in this very room!" mused the enthusiastic woman in awestruck accents. "I shall always be glad to have seen it."

Again we murmured assent; and the enthusiastic woman, with an obviously sudden remembrance of Mrs. Clinton, turned to her, and said:

"Of course you don't work in the same room?"

"Oh, I do my little writing anywhere," smiled Mrs. Clinton.

"In the dining-room generally," added Muriel, "when it's not wanted, you know."

"Ah, well, you don't need such complete quiet as Mr. Thompson Clinton must have to think out his books, do you?" asked the enthusiastic woman, with a most amiable smile.

"There's plenty of thought in my wife's books," said the Prince Consort.

"Oh yes, of that *sort*," conceded the enthusiastic woman.

Then we went back to the drawing-room, and the worshippers gradually took their leave, till only Lady Troughton and I were left. The child Muriel looked at her watch.

"Papa's got to go on to a party at the——," she began.

"There's no hurry, my dear; no hurry at all," interposed the Prince Consort.

"And, anyhow, I'm not going out, Muriel," said Mrs. Clinton. "I'm not asked there, you know."

Yet Lady Troughton and I said "Good-bye." The Prince Consort came downstairs with us, and made us renew our promises to procure his wife's novel. "It's really a striking book," said he. "And look here, Tom; just write her a line, and tell her how much you like it, will you? You're sure to like it, you know."

Lady Troughton stopped on the doorstep, and looked him full in the face. She said nothing; neither did he. But when they shook hands I saw her squeeze his. Then she was good enough to offer me a lift in her carriage, and I handed her in and followed myself. We drove a quarter of a mile or so in silence, and when we had gone thus far Lady Troughton made what appeared to me to be the only remark that could possibly be made.

"Poor little goose!" said Lady Troughton.

THE THREE STRANGERS

THOMAS HARDY

Among the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. Hence the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their ufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole ney were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses

and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of March 28, 182–, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eavesdroppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New th parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-

companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever — which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no

account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any

sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveller's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten beehives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilised by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood

revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, stranger," said the shepherd. "And faith, you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy, either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighbourhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said quickly. "My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy," continued the new-comer. "And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoke, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

"I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion. "Give

it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his existence; and a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!" In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-grey shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-coloured gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced

himself by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbour the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTiLL i CUM

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

"Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

"O, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-grey, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humour.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-

year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-grey at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

"Well, well, as I say," he resumed, "I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I'm not sorry for it."

"You don't live in Casterbridge?" said the shepherd.

"Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there."

"Going to set up in trade, perhaps?"

"No, no," said the shepherd's wife. "It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything."

The cinder-grey stranger paused, as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, "Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work to-morrow must be done."

"Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?" replied the shepherd's wife.

"'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town." However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, "There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry."

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger disdainfully. "I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again." He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

"Why should you do this?" she said reproachfully, as soon

as they were alone. "He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-grey was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-grey.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. "My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pin-cushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time —one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other

hand in the air, and, with an extemporising gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:

O my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all—
My trade is a sight to see;
For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, "Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish:

And waft 'em to a far countree!

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:

My tools are but common ones,
Simple shepherds all—
My tools are no sight to see:
A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"O, he's the ——!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail to-morrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to

do—Timothy Summers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded towards the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-grey took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, "Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to——?" he began: when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-grey. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:

To-morrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—
To-morrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:

And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly: his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

"What a man can it be?" said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him:

. . . circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

"Be jiggered!" cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

"What does that mean?" asked several.

"A prisoner escaped from the jail—that's what it means."

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, "I've often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now."

"I wonder if it is *my* man?" murmured the personage in cinder-grey.

"Surely it is!" said the shepherd involuntarily. "And surely we've zeed him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!"

"His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body," said the dairyman.

"And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone," said Oliver Giles.

"And he bolted as if he'd been shot at," said the hedge-carpenter.

"True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he'd been shot at," slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

"I didn't notice it," remarked the hangman.

"We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-grey roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

"I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in grey. "Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied——"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take

'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-grey.

"O—you here?" said the latter, smiling. "I thought you had gone to help in the capture." And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

"And I thought you had gone," said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

"Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without

me," said the first confidentially, "and such a night as it is, too. Besides, 'tis the business o' the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine."

"True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me."

"I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country."

"Nor I neither, between you and me."

"These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They'll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all."

"They'll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labour in the matter."

"True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?"

"No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there" (he nodded indefinitely to the right), "and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime."

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight ramblers over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due

silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travellers," he said, "did I hear ye speak to me?"

"You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge of not biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung tomorrow morning. Neighbours, do your duty, and seize the culpet!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they

discovered the shepherd's living room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country-seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid, considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light.

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable.

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behaviour of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song.

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived."

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?"

"Well, sir," said the constable, "he's the man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my every-day way; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to

Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

"I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir."

"'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt," said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover,

his marvellous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-grey never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honour they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

SPINDLEBERRIES[1]

JOHN GALSWORTHY

THE celebrated painter, Scudamore—whose studies of Nature had been hung on the line for so many years that he had forgotten the days when, not yet in the Scudamore manner, they depended from the sky—stood where his cousin had left him so abruptly. His lips, between comely grey moustache and comely pointed beard, wore a mortified smile, and he gazed rather dazedly at the spindleberries fallen on to the flagged courtyard from the branch she had brought to show him. Why had she thrown up her head as if he had struck her, and whisked round so that those dull-pink berries quivered and lost their rain-drops, and four had fallen? He had but said: "Charming! I'd like to use them!" And she had answered: "God!" and rushed away. Alicia really was crazed; who would have thought that once she had been so adorable? He stooped and picked up the four berries—a beautiful colour, that dull pink! And from below the coatings of success and the Scudamore manner a little thrill came up; the stir of emotional vision. Paint! What good? How express? He went across to the low wall which divided the courtyard of his expensively restored and beautiful old house from the first flood of the River Arun wandering silvery in pale winter sunlight. Yes, indeed! How express Nature, its translucence and mysterious unities, its mood never the same from hour to hour? Those brown-tufted rushes over there against the gold grey of light and water—those restless, hovering, white gulls! A kind of disgust at his own celebrated manner welled up within him—the disgust akin to Alicia's "God!" Beauty! What use—how express it? Had she been thinking the same thing?

He looked at the four pink berries glistening on the grey stone of the wall and memory stirred. What a lovely girl she had been, with her grey-green eyes shining under long lashes, the rose-petal colour in her cheeks and the too-fine dark hair—now so very grey—always blowing a little wild. An enchanting, enthusiastic creature! He remembered, as if it had been but last week, that day when they started from Arundel Station

[1] Copyright in America by Charles Scribner's Sons.

by the road to Burpham, when he was twenty-nine and she twenty-five, both of them painters and neither of them famed—a day of showers and sunlight in the middle of March, and Nature preparing for full spring! How they had chattered at first; and when their arms touched, how he had thrilled, and the colour had deepened in her rain-wet cheeks; and then, gradually, they had grown silent; a wonderful walk, which seemed leading so surely to a more wonderful end. They had wandered round through the village and down past the chalk-pit and Jacob's ladder, into the field path and so to the river bank. And he had taken her ever so gently round the waist, still silent, waiting for that moment when his heart would leap out of him in words and hers—he was sure—would leap to meet it. The path entered a thicket of blackthorn with a few primroses close to the little river running full and gentle. The last drops of a shower were falling, but the sun had burst through, and the sky above the thicket was cleared to the blue of speedwell flowers. Suddenly she had stopped and cried: "Look, Dick! Oh, look! It's heaven!" A high bush of blackthorn was lifted there, starry white against the blue and that bright cloud. It seemed to sing, it was so lovely; the whole of spring was in it. But the sight of her ecstatic face had broken down all his restraint, and tightening his arm round her he had kissed her lips. He remembered still the expression of her face, like a child's startled out of sleep. She had gone rigid, gasped, started away from him, quivered and gulped, and broken suddenly into sobs. Then, slipping from his arm, she had fled. He had stood at first, amazed and hurt, utterly bewildered; then, recovering a little, had hunted for her full half an hour before at last he found her sitting on wet grass, with a stony look on her face. He had said nothing, and she nothing, except to murmur: "Let's go on; we shall miss our train!" And all the rest of that day and the day after, until they parted, he had suffered from the feeling of having tumbled down off some high perch in her estimation. He had not liked it at all; it had made him very angry. Never from that day to this had he thought of it as anything but a piece of wanton prudery. Had it—had it been something else?

He looked at the four pink berries, and, as if they had uncanny power to turn the wheel of memory, he saw another vision of his cousin five years later. He was married by then, and already hung on the line. With his wife he had gone down to Alicia's

country cottage. A summer night, just dark and very warm. After many exhortations she had brought into the little drawing-room her last finished picture. He could see her now placing it where the light fell, her tall, slight form already rather sharp and meagre, as the figures of some women grow at thirty, if they are not married; the nervous, fluttering look on her charming face, as though she could hardly bear this inspection; the way she raised her shoulder just a little as if to ward off an expected blow of condemnation. No need! It had been a beautiful thing, a quite surprisingly beautiful study of night. He remembered with what a really jealous ache he had gazed at it—a better thing than he had ever done himself. And, frankly, he had said so. Her eyes had shone with pleasure.

"Do you really like it? I tried so hard!"

"The day you show that, my dear," he had said, "your name's made!" She had clasped her hands and simply sighed: "Oh, Dick!" He had felt quite happy in her happiness, and presently the three of them had taken their chairs out, beyond the curtains, on to the dark verandah, had talked a little, then somehow fallen silent. A wonderful warm, black, grape-bloom night, exquisitely gracious and inviting; the stars very high and white, the flowers glimmering in the garden-beds, and against the deep, dark blue, roses hanging, unearthly, stained with beauty. There was a scent of honeysuckle, he remembered, and many moths came fluttering by toward the tall, narrow chink of light between the curtains. Alicia had sat leaning forward, elbows on knees, ears buried in her hands. Probably they were silent because she sat like that. Once he heard her whisper to herself: "Lovely, lovely! Oh, God! How lovely!" His wife, feeling the dew, had gone in, and he had followed; Alicia had not seemed to notice. But when she too came in, her eyes were glistening with tears. She said something about bed in a queer voice; they had taken candles and gone up. Next morning, going to her little studio to give her advice about that picture, he had been literally horrified to see it streaked with lines of Chinese white—Alicia, standing before it, was dashing her brush in broad smears across and across. She heard him and turned round. There was a hard red spot in either cheek, and she said in a quivering voice: "It was blasphemy. That's all!" And turning her back on him she had gone on smearing it with Chinese white. Without a word, he had turned tail in simple disgust. Indeed, so deep had been

his vexation at that wanton destruction of the best thing she had ever done or was ever likely to do, that he had avoided her for years. He had always had a horror of eccentricity. To have planted her foot firmly on the ladder of fame and then deliberately kicked it away; to have wantonly foregone this chance of making money—for she had but a mere pittance! It had seemed to him really too exasperating, a thing only to be explained by tapping one's forehead. Every now and then he still heard of her, living down there, spending her days out in the woods and fields, and sometimes even her nights, they said, and steadily growing poorer and thinner and more eccentric; becoming, in short, impossibly difficult, as only Englishwomen can. People would speak of her as "such a dear," and talk of her charm, but always with that shrug which is hard to bear when applied to one's relations. What she did with the productions of her brush he never inquired, too disillusioned by that experience. Poor Alicia!

The pink berries glowed on the grey stone, and he had yet another memory. A family occasion when Uncle Martin Scudamore departed this life, and they all went up to bury him and hear his will. The old chap, whom they had looked on as a bit of a disgrace, money-grubbing up in the little grey Yorkshire town which owed its rise to his factory, was expected to make amends by his death, for he had never married—too sunk in industry, apparently, to have the time. By tacit agreement, his nephews and nieces had selected the Inn at Bolton Abbey, nearest beauty spot, for their stay. They had driven six miles to the funeral, in three carriages. Alicia had gone with him and his brother, the solicitor. In her plain black clothes she looked quite charming, in spite of the silver threads already thick in her fine dark hair, loosened by the moor wind. She had talked of painting to him with all her old enthusiasm, and her eyes had seemed to linger on his face as if she still had a little weakness for him. He had quite enjoyed that drive. They had come rather abruptly on the small grimy town clinging to the river banks, with old Martin's long, yellow brick house dominating it, about two hundred yards above the mills. Suddenly, under the rug, he felt Alicia's hand seize his with a sort of desperation, for all the world as if she were clinging to something to support her. Indeed, he was sure she did not know it was his hand she squeezed. The cobbled streets, the muddy looking water, the dingy, staring factories, the yellow, staring

house, the little dark-clothed, dreadfully plain workpeople, all turned out to do a last honour to their creator; the hideous new grey church, the dismal service, the brand-new tombstones —and all of a glorious autumn day! It was inexpressibly sordid—too ugly for words! Afterward the will was read to them seated decorously on bright mahogany chairs in the yellow mansion, a very satisfactory will, distributing in perfectly adjusted portions, to his own kinsfolk and nobody else, a very considerable wealth. Scudamore had listened to it dreamily, with his eyes fixed on an oily picture, thinking, "My God! What a thing!" and longing to be back in the carriage smoking a cigar to take the reek of black clothes and sherry—sherry!—out of his nostrils. He happened to look at Alicia. Her eyes were closed; her lips, always sweet-looking, quivered amusingly. And at that very moment the will came to her name. He saw those eyes open wide, and marked a beautiful pink flush, quite like that of old days, come into her thin cheeks. "Splendid!" he had thought; "it's really jolly for her. I *am* glad! Now she won't have to pinch. Splendid!" He shared with her to the full the surprised relief showing in her still beautiful face.

All the way home in the carriage he felt at least as happy over her good fortune as over his own, which had been substantial. He took her hand under the rug and squeezed it, and she answered with a long, gentle pressure, quite unlike the clutch when they were driving in. That same evening he strolled out to where the river curved below the Abbey. The sun had not quite set, and its last smoky radiance slanted into the burnished autumn wood. Some white-faced Herefords were grazing in lush grass, the river rippled and gleamed, all over golden scales. About that scene was the magic which has so often startled the hearts of painters, the wistful gold—the enchantment of a dream. For some minutes he had gazed with delight which had in it a sort of despair. A little crisp rustle ran along the bushes; the leaves fluttered, then hung quite still. And he heard a voice—Alicia's—speaking. "My lovely, lovely world!" And moving forward a step, he saw her standing on the river bank, braced against the trunk of a birch tree, her head thrown back, and her arms stretched wide apart as though to clasp the lovely world she had apostrophised. To have gone up to her would have been like breaking up a lovers' interview, and he turned round instead and went away.

A week later he heard from his brother that Alicia had refused her legacy. "I don't want it," her letter had said simply; "I couldn't bear to take it. Give it to those poor people who live in that awful place." Really eccentricity could go no further! They decided to go down and see her. Such mad neglect of her own good must not be permitted without some effort to prevent it. They found her very thin, and charming; humble, but quite obstinate in her refusal. "Oh! I couldn't really! I should be so unhappy. Those poor little stunted people who made it all for him! That little, awful town! I simply couldn't be reminded. Don't talk about it, please. I'm quite all right as I am." They had threatened her with lurid pictures of the workhouse and a destitute old age. To no purpose, she would not take the money. She had been forty when she refused that aid from heaven—forty, and already past any hope of marriage. For though Scudamore had never known for certain that she had ever wished or hoped for marriage, he had his theory—that all her eccentricity came from wasted sexual instinct. This last folly had seemed to him monstrous enough to be pathetic, and he no longer avoided her. Indeed, he would often walk over to tea in her little hermitage. With Uncle Martin's money he had bought and restored the beautiful old house over the River Arun, and was now only five miles from Alicia's, across country. She, too, would come tramping over at all hours, floating in with wild flowers or ferns, which she would put into water the moment she arrived. She had ceased to wear hats, and had by now a very doubtful reputation for sanity about the countryside. This was the period when Watts was on every painter's tongue, and he seldom saw Alicia without a disputation concerning that famous symbolist. Personally, he had no use for Watts, resenting his faulty drawing and crude allegories, but Alicia always maintained with her extravagant fervour that he was great because he tried to paint the soul of things. She especially loved a painting called "Iris"—a female symbol of the rainbow, which indeed, in its floating eccentricity, had a certain resemblance to herself. "Of course he failed," she would say; "he tried for the impossible, and went on trying all his life. Oh! I can't bear your rules and catchwords, Dick; what's the good of them! Beauty's too big, too deep!" Poor Alicia! She was sometimes very wearing.

He never knew quite how it came about that she went abroad with them to Dauphiné in the autumn of 1904—a rather

disastrous business. Never again would he take anyone travelling who did not know how to come in out of the cold. It was a painter's country and he had hired a little château in front of the Glandaz mountain—himself, his wife, their eldest girl, and Alicia. The adaptation of his famous manner to that strange scenery, its browns and French greys and filmy blues, so preoccupied him that he had scant time for becoming intimate with these hills and valleys. From the little gravelled terrace in front of the annex, out of which he had made a studio, there was an absorbing view over the pantiled old town of Die. It glistened below in the early or late sunlight, flat-roofed and of pinkish yellow, with the dim, blue River Drôme circling one side, and cut, dark cypress trees dotting the vineyarded slopes. And he painted it continually. What Alicia did with herself they none of them very much knew, except that she would come in and talk ecstatically of things and beasts and people she had seen. One favourite haunt of hers they did visit, a ruined monastery high up in the amphitheatre of the Glandaz mountain. They had their lunch up there, a very charming and remote spot, where the watercourses and ponds and chapel of the old monks were still visible, though converted by the farmer to his use. Alicia left them abruptly in the middle of their praises, and they had not seen her again till they found her at home when they got back. It was almost as if she had resented laudation of her favourite haunt. She had brought in with her a great bunch of golden berries, of which none of them knew the name; berries almost as beautiful as these spindleberries glowing on the stone of the wall. And a fourth memory of Alicia came.

Christmas Eve, a sparkling frost, and every tree round the little château rimed so that they shone in the starlight as though dowered with cherry blossom. Never were more stars in clear black sky above the whitened earth. Down in the little town a few faint points of yellow light twinkled in the mountain wind keen as a razor's edge. A fantastically lovely night—quite "Japanese," but cruelly cold. Five minutes on the terrace had been enough for all of them except Alicia. She—unaccountable, crazy creature—would not come in. Twice he had gone out to her, with commands, entreaties, and extra wraps; the third time he could not find her, she had deliberately avoided his onslaught and slid off somewhere to keep this mad vigil by frozen starlight. When at last she did come in she

reeled as if drunk. They tried to make her really drunk, to put warmth back into her. No good! In two days she was down with double pneumonia; it was two months before she was up again—a very shadow of herself. There had never been much health in her since then. She floated like a ghost through life, a crazy ghost, who still would steal away, goodness knew where, and come in with a flush in her withered cheeks, and her grey hair wild blown, carrying her spoil—some flower, some leaf, some tiny bird or little soft rabbit. She never painted now, never even talked of it. They had made her give up her cottage and come to live with them, literally afraid that she would starve herself to death in her forgetfulness of everything. These spindleberries even! Why, probably, she had been right up this morning to that sunny chalk-pit in the lew of the Downs to get them, seven miles there and back, when you wouldn't think she could walk seven hundred yards, and as likely as not had lain there on the dewy grass looking up at the sky, as he had come on her sometimes. Poor Alicia! And once he had been within an ace of marrying her! A life spoiled! By what, if not by love of beauty? But who would have ever thought that the intangible could wreck a woman, deprive her of love, marriage, motherhood, of fame, of wealth, of health? And yet—by George!—it had!

Scudamore flipped the four pink berries off the wall. The radiance and the meandering milky waters; that swan against the brown tufted rushes; those far, filmy Downs—there was beauty! *Beauty!* But, damn it all—moderation! Moderation! And, turning his back on that prospect, which he had painted so many times, in his celebrated manner, he went in, and up the expensively restored staircase to his studio. It had great windows on three sides, and perfect means for regulating light. Unfinished studies melted into walls so subdued that they looked like atmosphere. There were no completed pictures—they sold too fast. As he walked over to his easel his eye was caught by a spray of colour—the branch of spindleberries set in water, ready for him to use, just where the pale sunlight fell so that their delicate colour might glow and the few tiny drops of moisture still clinging to them shine. For a second he saw Alicia herself as she must have looked, setting them there, her transparent hands hovering, her eyes shining, that grey hair of hers all fine and loose. The vision vanished! But what had made her bring them after that horrified "God!" when

he spoke of using them? Was it her way of saying: "Forgive me for being rude"? Really she was pathetic, that poor devotee! The spindleberries glowed in their silver-lustre jug, sprayed up against the sunlight. They looked triumphant—as well they might, who stood for that which had ruined—or was it saved?—a life! Alicia! She had made a pretty mess of it, and yet who knew what secret raptures she had felt with her subtle lover, Beauty, by starlight and sunlight and moonlight, in the fields and woods, on the hilltops, and by riverside? Flowers, and the flight of birds, and the ripple of the wind, and all the shifting play of light and colour which made a man despair when he wanted to use them; she had taken them, hugged them to her with no afterthought, and been happy! Who could say that she had missed the price of life? Who could say it? . . . Spindleberries! A bunch of spindleberries to set such doubts astir in him! Why, what was beauty but just the extra value which certain forms and colours, blended, gave to things—just the extra value in the human market! Nothing else on earth, nothing! And the spindleberries glowed against the sunlight, delicate, remote!

Taking his palette, he mixed crimson lake, white, and ultramarine. What was that? Who sighed, away out there behind him? Nothing!

"Damn it all!" he thought; "this is childish. This is as bad as Alicia!" And he set to work to paint in his celebrated manner—spindleberries.

FOURTEEN DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

28Nov'55PTZ
NOV 14 1955 LU

16Nov'63DM
REC'D LD
NOV 17'63-1 PM

LIBRARY USE
APR 14 1965
REC'D LD
APR 14'65-5 PM

SEP 14'65 G
REC'D LD
SEP 7 '65-3 PM

YA 01556

920
495643 E58

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY